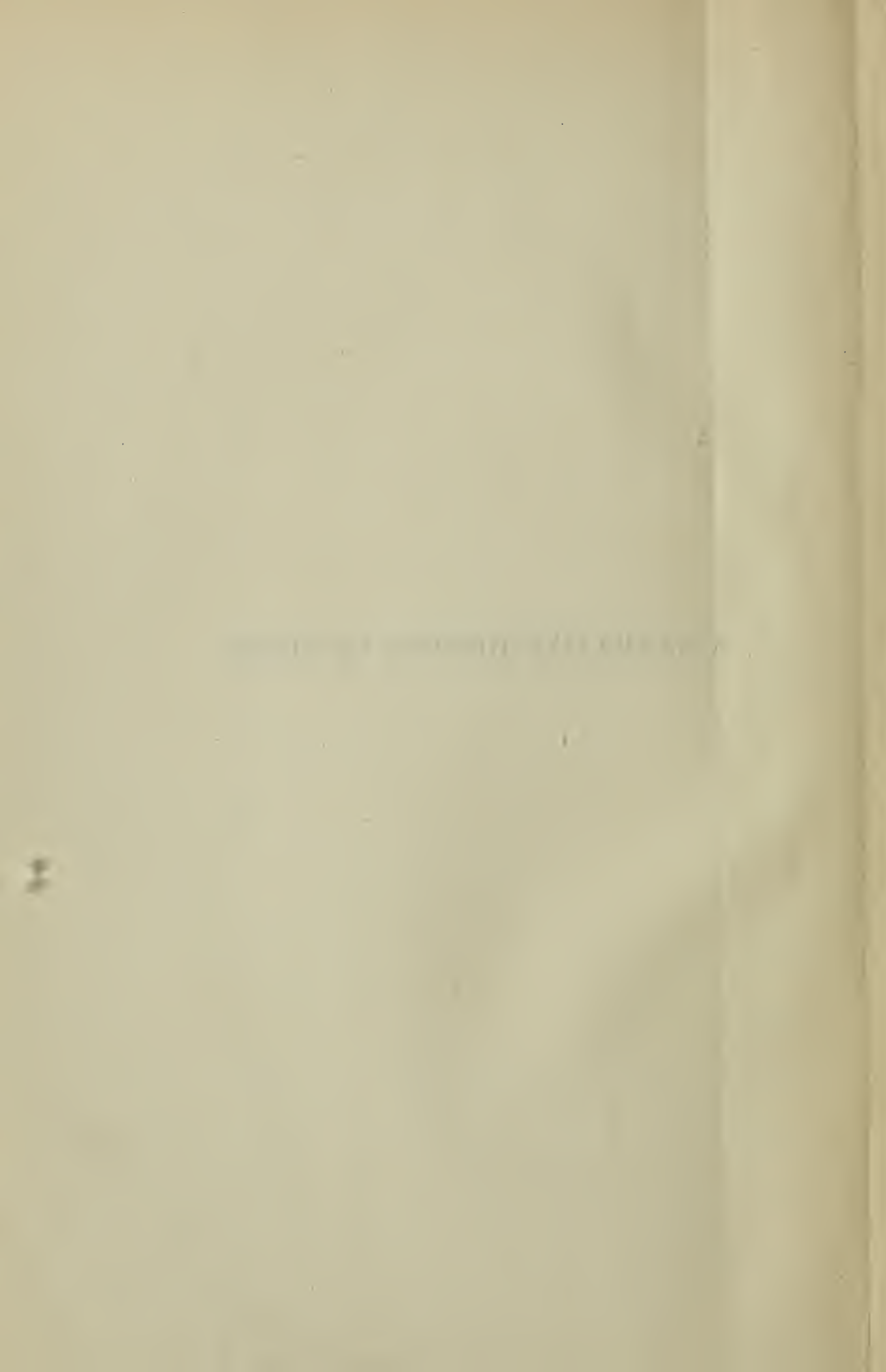


**HAROLD B. LEE LIBRARY
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY
PROVO, UTAH**

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC



ML
160
.M37
A78x
Vol. 2

The Art of Music

A Comprehensive Library of Information
for Music Lovers and Musicians

Editor-in-Chief

DANIEL GREGORY MASON

Columbia University

Associate Editors

EDWARD B. HILL

Harvard University

LELAND HALL

Past Professor, Univ. of Wisconsin

Managing Editor

CÉSAR SAERCHINGER

Modern Music Society of New York

In Fourteen Volumes

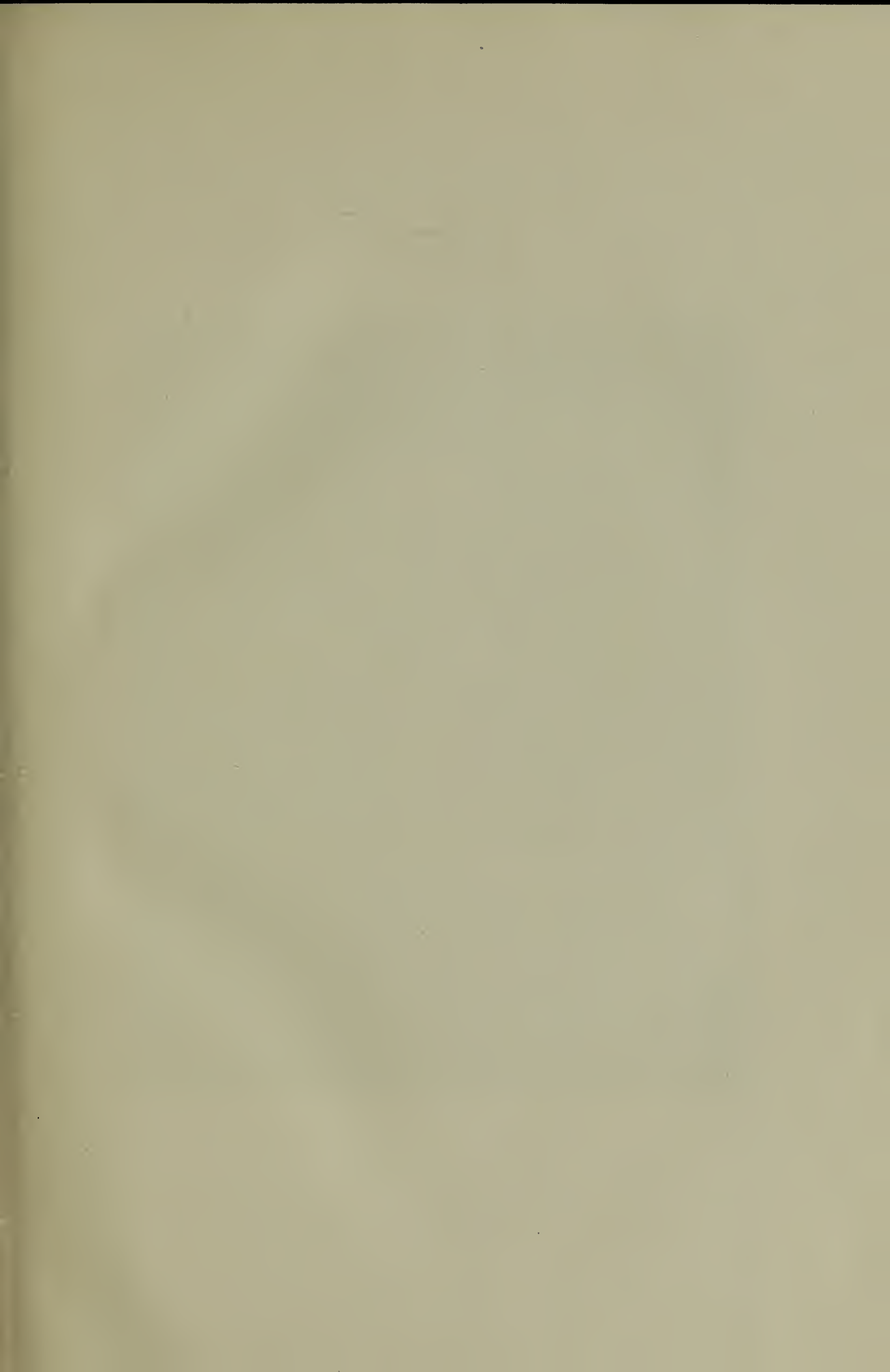
Profusely Illustrated

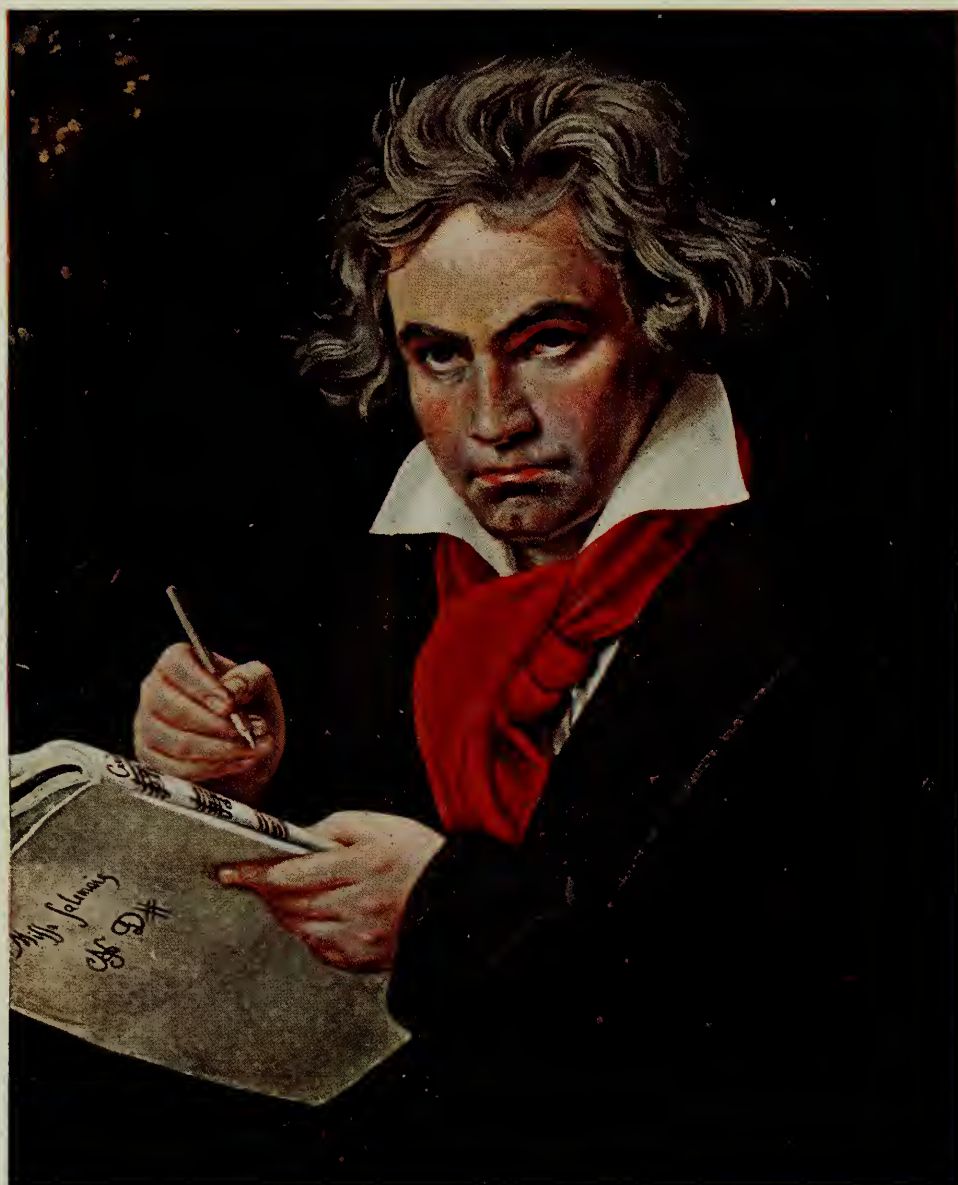


NEW YORK

THE NATIONAL SOCIETY OF MUSIC

HAROLD B. LEE LIBRARY
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY
PROVO, UTAH





Heathcote
after the painting by John G. Heathcote (reproduced by permission of the artist)

Beethoven

After the painting by Karl Stieler (Original owned by H. Hinrichsen, Leipzig)

THE ART OF MUSIC: VOLUME TWO

A Narrative History of Music

Department Editors:

LELAND HALL

AND

CÉSAR SAERCHINGER

Introduction by

LELAND HALL

Past Professor of Musical History, University of Wisconsin

BOOK II

CLASSICISM AND ROMANTICISM



NEW YORK

THE NATIONAL SOCIETY OF MUSIC

1915

Copyright, 1915, by
THE NATIONAL SOCIETY OF MUSIC, Inc.
[All Rights Reserved]

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME II

IN the first volume of *THE ART OF MUSIC* the history of the art has been carried in as straight a line as possible down to the death of Bach and Handel. These two great composers, while they still serve as the foundation of much present-day music, nevertheless stand as the culmination of an epoch in the development and style of music which is distinctly of the past. Many of the greatest of their conceptions are expressed in a language, so to speak, which rings old-fashioned in our ears. Something has been lost of their art. In the second volume, on the other hand, we have to do with the growth of what we may call our own musical language, with the language of Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Wagner and Brahms, men with whose ideals and with whose modes of expression we are still closely in touch. In closing the first volume the reader bids farewell to the time of music when polyphony still was supreme. In opening this he greets the era of melody and harmony, of the singing allegro, the scherzo, the rondo, of the romantic song, of salon music, of national opera and national life in music.

We have now to do with the symphony and the sonata, which even to the uninitiated spell music, no longer with the toccata and the fugue, words of more or less hostile alarm to those who dread attention. We shall deal with forms based upon melody, shall trace

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

their growth from their seeds in Italy, the land of melody, through the works of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. We shall watch the perfecting of the orchestra, its enrichment in sonority and in color. We shall see the Lied spring from the forehead of Schubert. We shall mark the development of the pianoforte and the growth of a noble literature of pianoforte music, rivalling that of the orchestra in proportion and in meaning. A new opera will come into being, discarding old traditions, alien myths, allying itself to the life of the peoples of Europe.

Lastly we shall note the touch of two great forces upon music, two forces mysteriously intertwined, the French Revolution and the Romantic Movement. Music will break from the control of rich nobles and make itself dear to the hearts of the common people who inherit the earth. It will learn to speak of intimate mysteries and intensely personal emotion. Composers will rebel from dependence upon a patronizing class and seek judgment and reward from a free public. In short, music will be no longer only the handmaiden of the church, or the servant of a socially exalted class, but the voice of the great human race, expressing its passions, its emotions, its common sadness and joy, its everyday dreams and even its realities.

The history of any art in such a stage of reformation is necessarily complicated, and the history of music is in no way exceptional. A thousand new influences shaped it, hundreds of composers and of virtuosi came for a while to the front. Political, social and even economical and commercial conditions bore directly upon it. To ravel from this tangle one or two threads upon which to weave a consecutive narration has been the object of the editors. Minuteness of detail would have thwarted the purpose of this as of the first volume, even if space could have been allowed for it. The book has, therefore, been limited to an exposition only of

INTRODUCTION

general movements, and to only general descriptions of the works of the greatest composers who contributed to them. Many lesser composers, famous in their day, have not been mentioned, because their work has had no real historical significance. They will, if at all vital, receive treatment in the later volumes.

On the other hand, the reader is cautioned against too easy acceptance of generalities which have long usurped a sway over the public, such as the statement that Emanuel Bach was the inventor of the sonata form, or that Haydn was the creator of the symphony and of the string quartet. Such forms are evolved, or built up step by step, not created. The foundations of them lie far back in the history of the art. In the present volume the attention of the reader will be especially called to the work of the Italian Pergolesi, and the Bohemian Johann Stamitz, in preparing these forms for Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven.

Just as, in order to bring into relief the main lines of development, many men and many details have been omitted, so, in order to bring the volume to well-rounded close, the works of many men which chronologically should find their place herein have been consigned arbitrarily to a third volume. Yet such treatment is perhaps not so arbitrary as will at first appear. Wagner, Brahms, and César Franck are the three greatest of the later romantic composers. They developed relatively independently of each other, and represent the culmination of three distinct phases of the romantic movement in music. Their separate influences made themselves felt at once even upon composers scarcely younger than they. Men so influenced belong properly among their followers, no matter what their ages. Inasmuch as the vast majority of modern music is most evidently founded upon some one of these three men, most conspicuously and almost inevitably upon Wagner,

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

contemporaries who so founded their work will be treated among the modern composers, as those men who lead the way over from the three great geniuses of a past generation to the distinctly new art of the present day. Notable among these are men like Max Bruch, Anton Bruckner, Hugo Wolf, Gustav Mahler, and Camille Saint-Saëns. Some of these men, by the close connection of their art to that of past generations, might perhaps more properly be treated in this volume, but the confusion of so many minor strands would obscure the trend of the narrative. Moreover, exigencies of space have enforced certain limits upon the editors. Thus, also, the national developments, the founding of distinctly national schools of composition in Scandinavia, Russia, Bohemia and elsewhere, directly influenced by the romantic movement in Germany, have had to find a place in Volume III.

It is perhaps in order to forestall any criticism that may be made in the score of what will seem to some serious omissions. Composers of individual merit, though their music is of light calibre, are perhaps entitled to recognition no less than their confrères in more ambitious fields. We refer to such delightful writers of comic opera as Johann Strauss, Millöcker, Suppé, etc., and the admirable English school of musical comedy headed by Sir Arthur Sullivan. Without denying the intrinsic value of their work, it must be admitted that they have contributed nothing essentially new or fundamental to the development of the art and are therefore of slight historical significance. The latter school will, however, find proper mention in connection with the more recent English composers to whom it has served as a foundation if not a model. More adequate treatment will be accorded to their works in the volumes on opera, etc.

In closing, a word should be said concerning the contributors to the Narrative History. There is ample prec-

INTRODUCTION

edent for the method here employed of assigning different periods to writers especially familiar with them. Such collaboration has obvious advantages, for the study of musical history has become an exceedingly diverse one and by specialization only can its various phases be thoroughly grasped. Any slight difference in point of view or in style will be more than offset by the careful and appreciative treatment accorded to each period or composer by writers whose sympathies have led them to a careful and adequate presentation, in clear perspective, of the merits of a given style of composition. The editors have endeavored as far as possible to avail themselves of the able researches recently made in Italy, Germany, France, etc., and they extend their acknowledgment to such authors of valuable special studies as Johannes Wolf, Hermann Kretschmar, Emil Vogel, Romain Rolland, Julien Tiersot, etc., and especially to the scholarly summary of Dr. Hugo Riemann, of Leipzig. A more extensive list of these works will be found in the Bibliographical Appendix to Volume III.

LELAND HALL

CONTENTS OF VOLUME TWO

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION BY LELAND HALL.	iii

PART I. THE CLASSIC IDEAL

CHAPTER

<p>I. THE REGENERATION OF THE OPERA</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">The eighteenth century and operatic convention—Porpora and Hasse—Pergolesi and the <i>opera buffa</i>—Jommelli, Piccini, Cimarosa, etc.—Gluck's early life; the Metastasio period—The comic opera in France; Gluck's reform; <i>Orfeo</i> and <i>Alceste</i>—The Paris period; Gluck and Piccini; the Iphigénies; Gluck's mission—Gluck's influence; the <i>opéra comique</i>; Cherubini.</p>	1
<p>II. THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE CLASSIC PERIOD</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">Classicism and the classic period—Political and literary forces—The conflict of styles; the sonata form—The Berlin school; the sons of Bach—The Mannheim reform: the genesis of the symphony—Followers of the Mannheim school; rise of the string quartet; Vienna and Salzburg as musical centres.</p>	45
<p>III. THE VIENNESE CLASSICS: HAYDN AND MOZART</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">Social aspects of the classic period; Vienna, its court and its people—Joseph Haydn—Haydn's work; the symphony; the string quartet—Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart—Mozart's style; Haydn and Mozart; the perfection of orchestral style—Mozart and the opera; the Requiem; the mission of Haydn and Mozart.</p>	75
<p>IV. LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">Form and formalism—Beethoven's life—His relations with his family, teachers, friends and other contemporaries—His character—The man and the artist—Determining factors in his development—The three periods in his work and their characteristics—His place in the history of music.</p>	128

CONTENTS OF VOLUME TWO

CHAPTER

PAGE

V. OPERATIC DEVELOPMENT IN ITALY AND FRANCE . 177

Italian opera at the advent of Rossini—Rossini and the Italian operatic renaissance—*Guillaume Tell*—Donizetti and Bellini—Spontini and the historical opera—Meyerbeer's life and works—His influence and followers—Development of *opéra comique*; Boieldieu, Auber, Hérold, Adam.

PART II. THE ROMANTIC IDEAL

VI. THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT: ITS CHARACTERISTICS AND ITS GROWTH 213

Modern music and modern history; characteristics of the music of the romantic period—Schubert and the German romantic movement in literature—Weber and the German reawakening—The Paris of 1830: French Romanticism—Franz Liszt—Hector Berlioz—Chopin; Mendelssohn—Leipzig and Robert Schumann—Romanticism and classicism.

VII. SONG LITERATURE OF THE ROMANTIC PERIOD . . . 269

Lyric poetry and song—The song before Schubert—Franz Schubert; Carl Löwe—Robert Schumann; Robert Franz; Mendelssohn and Chopin; Franz Liszt as song writer.

VIII. PIANOFORTE AND CHAMBER MUSIC OF THE ROMANTIC PERIOD 293

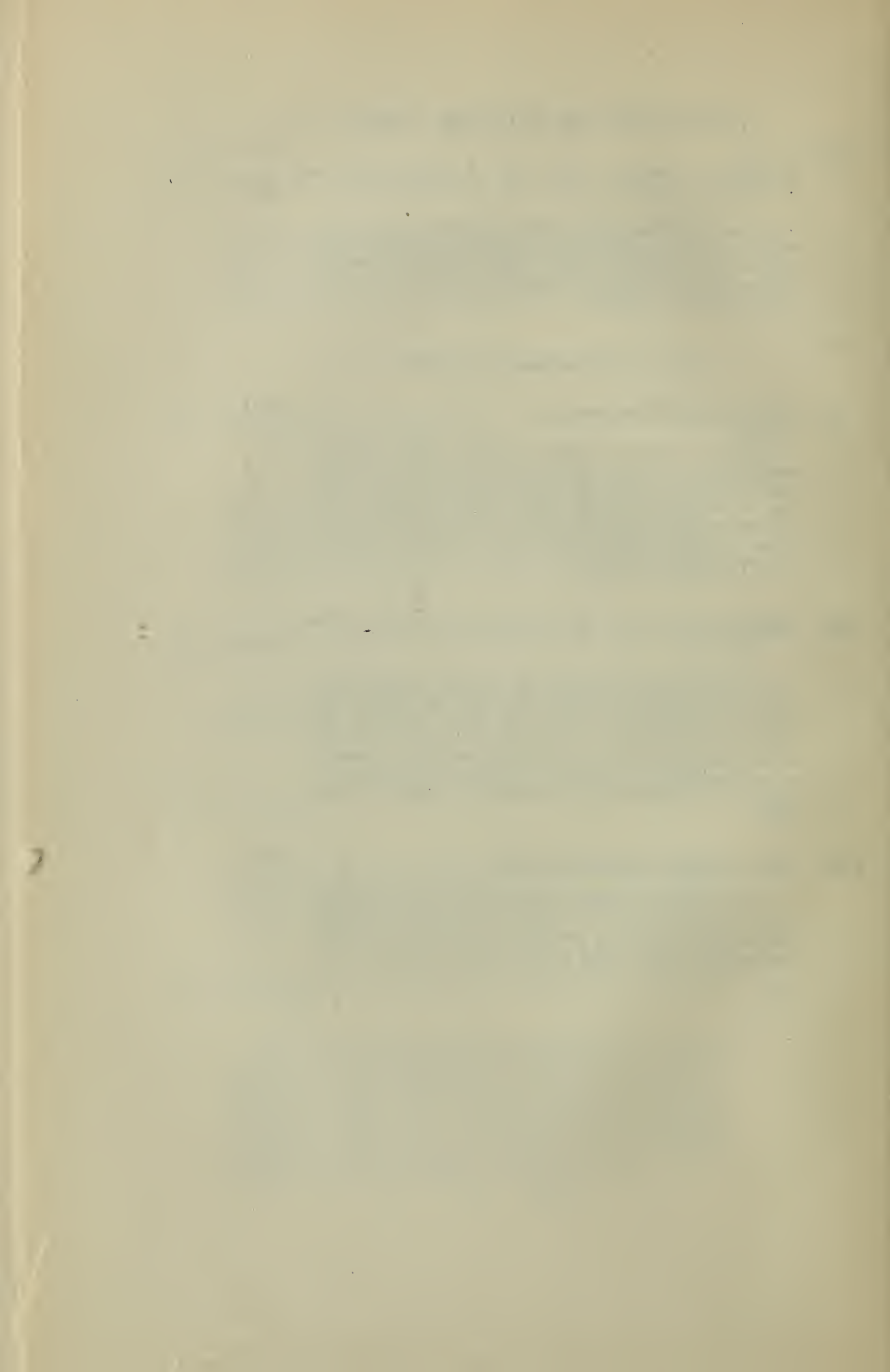
Development of the modern pianoforte—The pioneers: Schubert and Weber—Schumann and Mendelssohn—Chopin and others—Franz Liszt, virtuoso and poet—Chamber music of the romantic period; Ludwig Spohr and others.

IX. ORCHESTRAL LITERATURE AND ORCHESTRAL DEVELOPMENT 334

The perfection of instruments; emotionalism of the romantic period; enlargement of orchestral resources—The symphony in the romantic period; Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann; Spohr and Raff—The concert overture—The rise of program music; the symphonic *leit-motif*; Berlioz's *Fantastique*; other Berlioz symphonies; Liszt's dramatic symphonies—Symphonic poem; *Tasso*; Liszt's other symphonic poems—The legitimacy of program music.

CONTENTS OF VOLUME TWO

CHAPTER	PAGE
<p>X. ROMANTIC OPERA AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHORAL SONG</p>	372
<p>The rise of German opera; Weber and the romantic opera; Weber's followers—Berlioz as opera composer—The <i>drame lyrique</i> from Gounod to Bizet—<i>Opéra comique</i> in the romantic period; the <i>opéra bouffe</i>—Choral and sacred music of the romantic period.</p>	
<p>PART III. THE ERA OF WAGNER</p>	
<p>XI. WAGNER AND WAGNERISM</p>	401
<p>Periods of operatic reform; Wagner's early life and works—Paris: <i>Rienzi</i>, "The Flying Dutchman"—Dresden: <i>Tannhäuser</i> and <i>Lohengrin</i>; Wagner and Liszt; the revolution of 1848—<i>Tristan</i> and <i>Meistersinger</i>—Bayreuth; "The Nibelungen Ring"—<i>Parsifal</i>—Wagner's musico-dramatic reforms; his harmonic revolution; the <i>leit-motif</i> system—The Wagnerian influence.</p>	
<p>XII. NEO-ROMANTICISM: JOHANNES BRAHMS AND CÉSAR FRANCK</p>	443
<p>The antecedents of Brahms—The life and personality of Brahms—The idiosyncrasies of his music in rhythm, melody, and harmony as expressions of his character—His works for pianoforte, for voice, and for orchestra; the historical position of Brahms—Franck's place in the romantic movement—His life, personality, and the characteristics of his style; his works as the expression of religious mysticism.</p>	
<p>XIII. VERDI AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES</p>	477
<p>Verdi's mission in Italian opera—His early life and education—His first operas and their political significance—His second period: the maturing of his style—Crowning achievements of his third period—Verdi's contemporaries.</p>	



A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

THE END OF THE WORLD

213

CHAPTER I

THE REGENERATION OF THE OPERA

The eighteenth century and operatic convention—Porpora and Hasse—Pergolesi and the *opera buffa*—Jommelli, Piccini, Cimarosa, etc.—Gluck's early life; the Metastasio period—The comic opera in France; Gluck's reform; *Orfeo* and *Alceste*—The Paris period; Gluck and Piccini; the *Iphigénies*; Gluck's mission—Gluck's influence; Salieri and Sarti; the development of *opéra comique*; Cherubini.

WHILE the deep, quiet stream of Bach's genius flowed under the bridges all but unnoticed, the marts and highways of Europe were a babel of operatic intrigue and artistic shams. Handel in England was running the course of his triumphal career, which luckily forced him into the tracks of a new art-form; on the continent meantime Italian opera reached at once its most brilliant and most absurd epoch under the leadership of Hasse and Porpora; even Rameau, the founder of modern harmonic science, did not altogether keep aloof from its influence, while perpetuating the traditions of Lully in Paris. Vocal virtuosi continued to set the musical fashions of the age, the artificial soprano was still a force to which composers had to submit; indeed, artificiality was the keynote of the century.

The society of the eighteenth century was primarily concerned with the pursuit of sensuous enjoyment. In Italy especially 'the cosmic forces existed but in order to serve the endless divertissement of superficial and brainless beings, in whose eyes the sun's only mission was to illumine picturesque cavalcades and water-parties, as that of the moon was to touch with trembling ray the amorous forest glades.' Monnier's

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

vivid pen-picture of eighteenth century Venetian society applies, with allowance made for change of scene and local color, to all the greater Italian cities. 'What equivocal figures! What dubious pasts! Law (of Mississippi bubble fame) lives by gambling, as does the Chevalier Desjardins, his brother in the Bastille, his wife in a lodging-house; the Count de Bonneval, turbaned, sitting on a rug with legs crossed, worships Allah, carries on far-reaching intrigues and is poisoned by the Turks; Lord Baltimore, travelling with his physician and a seraglio of eight women, with a pair of negro guards; Ange Goudar, a wit, a cheat at cards, a police spy and perjurer, rascally, bold, and ugly; and his wife Sarah, once a servant in a London tavern, marvellously beautiful, who receives the courtly world at her palace in Pausilippo near Naples, and subjugates it with her charm; disguised maidens, false princes, fugitive financiers, literary blacklegs, Greeks, chevaliers of all industries, wearers of every order, splenetic *grands seigneurs*, and the kings of Voltaire's *Candide*. Of such is the Italian society of the eighteenth century composed.

Music in this artificial atmosphere could only flatter the sense of hearing without appealing to the intelligence, excite the nerves and occasionally give a keener point to voluptuousness, by dwelling on a note of elegant sorrow or discreet religiousness. The very church, according to Dittersdorf, had become a musical boudoir, the convent a conservatory. As for the opera, it could not be anything but a lounge for the idle public. The Neapolitan school, which reigned supreme in Europe, provided just the sort of amusement demanded by that public. It produced scores of composers who were hailed as *maestri* to-day and forgotten to-morrow. Hundreds of operas appeared, but few ever reached publication; their nature was as ephemeral as the public's taste was fickle, and a success meant no

OPERATIC CONVENTION

more to a composer than new commissions to turn out operas for city after city, to supply the insatiate thirst for novelty. The manner in which these commissions were carried out is indicative of the result. Composers were usually given a libretto not of their choosing; the recitatives, which constituted the dramatic groundwork, were turned out first and distributed among the singers. The writing of the arias was left to the last so that the singers' collaboration or advice could be secured, for upon their rendition the success of the whole opera depended; they were, indeed, *written for* the singers—the particular singers of the first performance—and in such a manner that their voices might show to the best advantage. As Leopold Mozart wrote in one of his letters, they made 'the coat to fit the wearer.' The form which these operas took was an absolute stereotype; a series of more or less disconnected recitatives and arias, usually of the *da capo* form, strung together by the merest thread of a plot. It was a concert in costume rather than the drama in music which was the original conception of opera in the minds of its inventors.

Pietro Metastasio, the most prolific of librettists, was eminently the purveyor of texts for these operas, just as Rinuccini, the idealist, had furnished the poetic basis for their nobler forerunners. Metastasio's inspiration flowed freely, both in lyrical and emotional veins, but 'the brilliancy of his florid rhetoric stifled the cry of the heart.' His plots were overloaded with the vapid intrigues that pleased the taste of his contemporaries, with quasi-pathetic characters, with passionate climaxes and explosions. His popularity was immense. He could count as many as forty editions of his own works and among his collaborators were practically all the great composers, from Handel to Gluck and Cimarosa. As personifying the elements which sum up the opera during this its most irrational period we may

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

take two figures of extraordinary eminence—Niccola Porpora and Johann Adolf Hasse.

I

Niccola Porpora (1686-1766), while prominent in his own day as composer, conductor, and teacher (among his pupils was Joseph Haydn), is known to history chiefly by his achievements as a singing master—perhaps the greatest that ever lived. The art of *bel canto*, that exaltation of the human voice for its own sake, which in him reached its highest point, was doubtless the greatest enemy to artistic sincerity and dramatic truth, the greatest deterrent to operatic progress in the eighteenth century. Though possessed of ideals of intrinsic beauty—sensuousness of tone, dynamic power, brilliance, and precision like that of an instrument—this art would to-day arouse only wonder, not admiration. Porpora understood the human voice in all its peculiarities; he could produce, by sheer training, singers who, like Farinelli, Senesino, and Caffarelli, were the wonder of the age. By what methods his results were reached we have no means of knowing, for his secret was never committed to writing, but his method was most likely empirical, as distinguished from the scientific, or anatomical, methods of to-day. It was told that he kept Caffarelli for five or six years to one page of exercises, and then sent him into the world as the greatest singer of Europe—a story which, though doubtless exaggerated, indicates the purely technical nature of his work.

Porpora wrote his own *vocalizzi*, and, though he composed in every form, all of his works appear to us more or less like *solfeggi*. His cantatas for solo voice and harpsichord show him at his best, as a master of the florid Italian vocal style, with consummate appreciation of the possibilities of the vocal apparatus.

PORPORA AND HASSE

His operas, of which he wrote no less than fifty-three, are for the most part tedious, conventional, and overloaded with ornament, in every way characteristic of the age; the same is true in some measure of his oratorios, numerous church compositions, and chamber works, all of which show him to be hardly more than a thoroughly learned and accomplished technician.

But Porpora's fame attracted many talented pupils, including the brilliant young German, Hasse (1699-1783), mentioned above, who, however, quickly forsook him in favor of Alessandro Scarlatti, a slight which Porpora never forgave and which served as motive for a life-long rivalry between the two men. Hasse, originally trained in the tradition of the Hamburg opera and its Brunswick offshoot (where he was engaged as tenor and where he made his début with his only German opera, 'Antiochus'), quickly succumbed to the powerful Italian influence. The Italians took kindly to him, and, after his début in Naples with 'Tigrane' (1773), surnamed him *il caro sassone*. His marriage with the celebrated Faustina Bordoni linked him still closer to the history of Italian opera; for in the course of his long life, which extends into the careers of Haydn and Mozart, he wrote no less than seventy operas, many of them to texts by the famed Metastasio, and most of them vehicles for the marvellous gifts of his wife. While she aroused the enthusiasm of audiences throughout Europe, he enjoyed the highest popularity of any operatic composer through half a century. Together they made the opera at Dresden (whither Hasse was called in 1731 as royal kapellmeister) the most brilliant in Germany—one that even Bach, as we have seen, was occasionally beguiled into visiting. Once Hasse was persuaded to enter into competition with Handel in London (1733), the operatic capital of Europe, where Faustina, seven years before, had vanquished her great rival Cuzzoni and provided

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

the chief operatic diversion of the Handel régime to the tune of £2,000 a year! Only the death of August the Strong in 1763 ended the Hasses' reign in Dresden, where during the bombardment of 1760 Hasse's library and most of the manuscripts of his works were destroyed by fire. What remains of them reveals a rare talent and a consummate musicianship which, had it not been employed so completely in satisfying the prevailing taste and propitiating absurd conventions, might still appeal with the vitality of its harmonic texture and the beauty of its melodic line. Much of the polyphonic skill and the spontaneous charm of a Handel is evident in these works, but they lack the breadth, the grandeur and the seriousness that distinguish the work of his greater compatriot. Over-abundance of success militates against self-criticism, which is the essential quality of genius, and Hasse's success was not, like Handel's, dimmed by the changing taste of a surfeited public. Hasse's operas signalize at once the high water mark of brilliant achievement in an art form now obsolete and the ultimate degree of its fatuousness.

Hasse and Porpora, then, were the leaders of those who remained true to the stereotyped form of opera, the singers' opera, whose very nature precluded progress. They and a host of minor men, like Francesco Feo, Leonardo Vinci, Pasquale Cafaro, were enrolled in a party which resisted all ideas of reform; and their natural allies in upholding absurd conventions were the singers, that all-powerful race of virtuosi, the impresarios, and all the great tribe of adherents who derived a lucrative income from the system. Against these formidable forces the under-current of reform—both musical and dramatic—felt from the beginning of the century, could make little head. The protests of men like Benedetto Marcello, whose satire *Il teatro alla moda* appeared in 1722,

PORPORA AND HASSE

were voices crying in the wilderness. Yet reform was inevitable, a movement no less momentous than when the Florentine reform of 1600 was under way—the great process of crystallization and refinement which was to usher in that most glorious era of musical creation known as the classic period. Like the earlier reform, it signified a reaction against technique, against soulless display of virtuosity, a tendency toward simplicity, subjectivity, directness of expression—a return to nature.

Though much of the pioneer work was done by composers of instrumental music whose discussion must be deferred to the next chapter, the movement had its most spectacular manifestations in connection with opera, and in that aspect is summed up in the work of Gluck, the outstanding personality in the second half of the eighteenth century. In the domain of absolute music it saw its beginnings in the more or less spontaneous efforts of instrumentalists like Fasch, Foerster, Benda, and Johann Stamitz. First among those whose initiative was felt in *both* directions we must name Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, the young Neapolitan who, born in 1710, had his brilliant artistic career cut short at the premature age of twenty-six.

II

Pergolesi was the pupil of Greco, Durante, and Feo at the *Conservatorio dei Poveri* at Naples, where a biblical drama and two operas from his pen were performed in 1731 without arousing any particular attention. But a solemn mass which he was commissioned to write by the city of Naples in praise of its patron saint, and which was performed upon the occasion of an earthquake, brought him sudden fame. The commission probably came to him through the good offices of Prince Stegiano, to whom he dedicated his famous

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

trio sonatas. These sonatas, later published in London, brought an innovation which had no little influence upon contemporary composers; namely, the so-called *cantabile* (or singing) *allegro* as the first movement. Riemann, who has edited two of them,* calls attention to the richly developed sonata form of the first movement of the G major trio especially, of which the works of Fasch, Stamitz, and Gluck are clearly reminiscent. 'The altogether charming, radiant melodies of Pergolesi are linked with such conspicuous, forcible logic in the development of the song-like theme, always in the upper voice, that we are not surprised by the attention which the movement aroused. We are here evidently face to face with the beginning of a totally different manner of treatment in instrumental melodies, which I would like to call a transplantation of the aria style to the instrumental field.'† We shall have occasion to refer to this germination of a new style later on. At present we must consider another of Pergolesi's important services to art—the creation of the *opera buffa*.‡

We have had occasion to observe in another chapter the success of the 'Beggar's Opera' in England in 1723, which hastened the failure of the London Academy under Handel's management. Vulgar as it was, this novelty embodied the same tendency toward simplicity which was the essential element of the impending reform; it was near to the people's heart and there found a quick response. This ballad-opera, as it was called, was followed by many imitations, notably Coffey's 'The Devil to Pay, or The Wives Metamorphosed' (1733), which, later produced in Germany, was adapted

* Collegium musicum No. 29.

† Riemann: Handbuch, II³, p. 121.

‡ Usually Nicolo Logroscino is named as having gone before him, but, as that composer is in evidence only from 1738 (two years after Pergolesi's death), the date of his birth usually accepted (1700) seems doubtful (cf. Kretzschmar in *Peters-Jahrbuch*, 1908).—Riemann: *Ibid*.

PERGOLESI AND THE OPERA BUFFA

by Standfuss (1752) and Johann Adam Hiller (1765) and thus became the point of departure for the German singspiel. This in turn reacted against the popularity of Italian opera in Germany. The movement had its Italian parallel in the fashion for the so-called *intermezzi* which composers of the Neapolitan school began very early in the century to interpolate between the acts of their operas, as, in an earlier period, they had been interpolated between the acts of the classic tragedies (cf. Vol. I, p. 326 ff). Unlike these earlier spectacular diversions, the later *intermezzi* were comic pieces that developed a continuous plot independent of that of the opera itself—an anomalous mixture of tragedy and comedy which must have appeared ludicrous at times even to eighteenth century audiences. These artistic trifles were, however, not unlikely, in their simple and unconventional spontaneity, to have an interest surpassing that of the opera proper. Such was the case with *La serva padrona*, which Pergolesi produced between the acts of his opera *Il pigionier* (1733). This graceful little piece made so immediate an appeal that it completely overshadowed the serious work to which it was attached, and, indeed, all the other dramatic works of its composer, whose fame to-day rests chiefly upon it and the immortal *Stabat mater*, which was his last work.

La serva padrona is one of the very few operatic works of the century that are alive to-day. An examination of its contents quickly reveals the reason, for its pages breathe a charm, a vivacity, a humor which we need not hesitate to call Mozartian. Indeed, it leaves little doubt in our minds that Mozart, born twenty-three years later, must have been acquainted with the work of its composer. At any rate he, no less than Guglielmi, Piccini, Paesiello, and Cimarosa, the chief representatives of the *opera buffa*, are indebted to him for the form, since, as the first *intermezzo* opera ca-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

pable of standing by itself (it was afterward so produced in Paris), it must be regarded as the first real *opera buffa*.

Most of the later Neapolitans, in fact, essayed both the serious and comic forms, not unmindful of the popular success which the latter achieved. It became, in time, a dangerous competitor to the conventionalized *opera seria*, as the ballad-opera and the singspiel did in England and Germany, and the *opéra bouffon* was to become in France. Its advantage lay in its freedom from the traditional operatic limitations (*cf.* Vol. I, page 428). It might contain an indiscriminate mixture of arias, recitatives, and ensembles; its *dramatis personæ* were a flexible quantity. Moreover, it disposed of the male soprano, favoring the lower voices, especially basses, which had been altogether excluded from the earlier operas. Hence it brought about a material change in conditions with which composers had thus far been unable to cope. In it the stereotyped *da capo* aria yielded its place to more flexible forms; one of its first exponents, Nicolo Logroscino,* introduced the animated ensemble finale with many movements, which was further developed by his successors. These wholesome influences were soon felt in the serious opera as well: it adopted especially the finale and the more varied ensembles of the *opera buffa*, though lacking the spicy parodistical element and the variegated voices of its rival. Thus, in the works of Pergolesi's successors, especially Jommelli and Piccini, we see foreshadowed the epoch-making reform of Gluck.

There is nothing to show, however, that Pergolesi himself was conscious of being a reformer. His personal character, irresponsible, brilliant rather than

* Born in Naples, date unknown; died there in 1763. He was one of the creators of *opera buffa*, his parodistic dialect pieces—*Il governatore*, *Il vecchio marito*, *Tanto bene che male*, etc.—being among its first examples. In 1747 he became professor of counterpoint at the *Conservatorio dei figliuoli dispersi* in Palermo.

NICOLA JOMMELLI

introspective, would argue against that. We must think of him as a true genius gifted by the grace of heaven, romantic, wayward, and insufficiently balanced to economize his vital forces toward a ripened age of artistic activity. He nevertheless produced a number of other operas, mostly serious, masses, and miscellaneous ecclesiastical and chamber works. His death was due to consumption. So much legend surrounds his brief career that it has been made the subject of two operas, by Paolo Serrão and by Monteviti.

C. S.

III

About the close of Pergolesi's career two men made their débuts whose lives were as nearly coeval as those of Bach and Handel and who, though of unequal merit, if measured by the standards of posterity, were both important factors in the reform movement which we are describing. These men were Jommelli and Gluck, both born in 1714, the year which also gave to the world Emanuel Bach, the talented son of the great Johann Sebastian.

Nicola Jommelli was born at Aversa (near Naples). At first a pupil of Durante, he received his chief training under Feo and Leo. His first opera, *L'Errore amoroso*, was brought out under an assumed name at Naples when the composer was but twenty-three, and so successfully that he had no hesitation in producing his *Odoardo* under his own name the following year. Other operas by him were heard in Rome, in Bologna (where he studied counterpoint with Padre Martini); in Venice, where the success of his *Merope* secured him the post of director of the *Conservatorio degli incurabili*; and in Rome, whither he had gone in 1749 as substitute *maestro di capella* of St. Peter's. In Vienna, which he visited for the first time in 1748, *Didone*, one

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

of his finest operas, was produced. In 1753 Jommelli became kapellmeister at Ludwigslust, the wonderful rococo palace of Karl Eugen, duke of Württemberg, near Stuttgart. Like Augustus the Strong of Saxony, the elector of Bavaria, the margrave of Bayreuth, the prince-bishop of Cologne, this pleasure-loving ruler of a German principality had known how to *s'enversailer*—to adopt the luxuries and refinements of the court of Versailles, then the European model for royal and princely extravagance. His palace and gardens were magnificent and his opera house was of such colossal dimensions that whole regiments of cavalry could cross the stage. He needed a celebrated master for his chapel and his opera; his choice fell upon Jommelli, who spent fifteen prosperous years in his employ, receiving a salary of '6,100 gulden per annum, ten buckets of honorary wine, wood for firing and forage for two horses.'

At Stuttgart Jommelli was strongly influenced by the work of the German musicians; increased harmonic profundity and improved orchestral technique were the most palpable results. He came to have a better appreciation of the orchestra than any of his countrymen; at times he even made successful attempts at 'tone painting.' His orchestral 'crescendo,' with which he made considerable furore, was a trick borrowed from the celebrated Mannheim school. It is interesting to note that the school of stylistic reformers which had its centre at Mannheim, not far from Stuttgart, was then in its heyday; two years before Jommelli's arrival in Stuttgart the famous Opus 1 of Johann Stamitz—the sonatas (or rather symphonies) in which the Figured Bass appears for the first time as an integral obbligato part—was first heard in Paris. The so-called *Simphonies d'Allemagne* henceforth appeared in great number; they were published mostly in batches, often in regular monthly or weekly sequence as 'periodical

NICOLA JOMMELLI

overtures,' and so spread the gospel of German classicism all over Europe. How far Jommelli was influenced by all this it would be difficult to determine, but we know that when in 1769 he returned to Naples his new manner found no favor with his countrymen, who considered his music too heavy. The young Mozart in 1770 wrote from there: 'The opera here is by Jommelli. It is beautiful, but the style is too elevated as well as too antique for the theatre.' It is well to remark here how much Jommelli's music in its best moments resembles Mozart's. He, no less than Pergolesi, must be credited with the merit of having influenced that master in many essentials.

Jommelli allowed none but his own operas to be performed at Stuttgart. The productions were on a scale, however, that raised the envy of Paris. No less a genius than Noverre, the reformer of the French ballet, was Jommelli's collaborator in these magnificent productions; and Jommelli also yielded to French influences in the matter of the chorus. He handled Metastasio's texts with an eye to their psychological moments, and infused into his scores much of dramatic truth. In breaking up the monotonous sequence of solos, characteristic of the fashionable Neapolitan opera, he actually anticipated Gluck. All in all, Jommelli's work was so unusually strong and intensive that we wonder why he fell short of accomplishing the reform that was imminent. 'Noverre and Jommelli in Stuttgart might have done it,' says Oscar Bié, in his whimsical study of the opera, 'but for the fact that Stuttgart was a hell of frivolity and levity, a luxurious mart for the purchase and sale of men.'

Jommelli's last Stuttgart opera was *Fetonte*.* When he returned to Italy in 1769 he found the public mad

* After his return to Naples his three last works, *Armida*, *Demofonte*, and *Ifigenia in Tauride*, passed over the heads of an unmindful public. The composer felt these disappointments keenly. Impaired in health he retired to his native town of Aversa and died there August 25, 1774.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

with enthusiasm over a new *opera buffa* entitled *Cecchina, ossia la buona figliuola*. In Rome it was played in all the theatres, from the largest opera house down to the marionette shows patronized by the poor. Fashions were all *alla Cecchina*; houses, shops, and wines were named after it, and a host of catch-words and phrases from its text ran from lip to lip. 'It is probably the work of some boy,' said the veteran composer, but after he had heard it—'Hear the opinion of Jommelli—this is an inventor!'

The boy inventor of *Cecchina* was Nicola Piccini, another Neapolitan, born in 1728, pupil of Leo and Durante, who was destined to become the most famous Italian composer of his day, though his works have not survived to our time. His début had been made in 1754 with *Le donne dispettose*, followed by a number of other settings of Metastasio texts. We are told that he found difficulty in getting hearings at first, because the comic operas of Logroscino monopolized the stage. Already, then, composers were forced into the *opera buffa* with its greater vitality and variety. Piccini's contribution to its development was the extension of the duet to greater dramatic purpose, and also of the concerted finale first introduced by Logroscino. We shall meet him again, as the adversary of Gluck. Of hardly less importance than he were Tommaso Traetto (1727-1779), 'the most tragic of the Italians,' who surpassed his contemporaries and followers in truth and force of expression, and in harmonic strength; Pietro Guglielmi (1727-1804), who with his 115 operas gained the applause of all Italy, of Dresden, of Brunswick, and London; Antonio Sacchini (1734-1786), who, besides grace of melody, attained at times an almost classic solidity; and Giovanni Paisiello (1741-1816), whose decided talent for *opera buffa* made him the successful rival of Piccini and Cimarosa.

Paisiello, with Domenico Cimarosa (1749-1801), was

PICCINI, CIMAROSA, AND OTHERS

the leading representative of the *buffa* till the advent of Mozart. As Hadow suggests, he might have achieved real greatness had he been less constantly successful. 'His life was one triumphal procession from Naples to St. Petersburg, from St. Petersburg to Vienna, from Vienna to Paris.' Ferdinand of Sicily, Empress Catharine of Russia, Joseph II of Austria, and even Napoleon were successively his patrons; and his productiveness was such that he never had time, even had he had inclination, to criticise his own works. Of his ninety-four operas only one, 'The Barber of Seville,' is of historic interest, for its popularity was such that, until Rossini, no composer dared to treat the same theme. Cimarosa deserves perhaps more extended notice than many others on account of his *Matrimonio segreto*, written in Russia, which won unprecedented success there and in Italy. It is practically the only one of all the works of composers just mentioned that has not fallen a victim to time. Its music is simple and tuneful, fresh and full of good humor.

The eighteenth century public based its judgments solely on mere externals—a pleasing tune, a brilliant singer, a sumptuous *mise-en-scène* caught its favor, the merest accident or circumstance might kill or make an opera. To-day a composer is carried off in triumph, to be hissed soon after by the same public. Rivalry among composers is the order of the day. Sacchini, Piccini, Paesiello, Cimarosa, are successively favorites of Italian audiences; in London Christian Bach and Sacchini divide the public as Handel and Bononcini did before them; in Vienna Paesiello and Cimarosa are applauded with the same acclaim as Gluck; in St. Petersburg Galuppi,* Traetta, Paesiello, and Cimarosa

* Baldassare Galuppi, born on the island of Burano, near Venice, in 1706; died in Venice, 1785, was a pupil of Lotti. He ranks among the most eminent composers of comic operas, producing no less than 112 operas and 3 dramatic cantatas in every musical centre of Europe. He also composed much church music and some notable piano sonatas.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

follow each other in the service of the sovereign (Catharine II), who could not differentiate any tunes but the howls of her nine dogs; in Paris, at last, the leading figures become the storm centre of political agitations. All these composers' names are glibly pronounced by the busy tongues of a brilliant but shallow society. Favorite arias, like Galuppi's *Se per me*, Sacchini's *Se cerca, se dice*, Piccini's *Se il ciel*, are compared after the manner of race entries. Florimo, the historian of the Naples opera, dismissed the matter with a few words: 'Piccini is original and prolific; Sacchini gay and light, Paesiello new and lithe, Cafaro learned in harmony, Galuppi experienced in stagecraft, Gluck a *filosofia economica*.' They all have their merits—but, after all, the difference is a matter of detail, a fit subject for the gossip of an opera box. Even Gluck is but one of them, if his Italian operas are at all different the difference has escaped his critics.

But all of these composers, as well as some of their predecessors, worked consciously or unconsciously in a regeneration that was slowly but surely going forward. The working out of solo and ensemble forms into definite patterns; the development of the recitative from mere heightened declamation to a free arioso, fully accompanied, and to the *accompagnato* not followed by an aria at all; the introduction of concertising instruments which promptly developed into independent inner voices and broadened the orchestral polyphony, the dynamic contrasts—at first abrupt, then gradual—which Jommelli took over from the orchestral technique of Mannheim; the ingenious construction of ensembles and the development of the finale into a *pezzo concertanto*—all these tended toward higher organization, individual and specialized development, though purely musical at first and strictly removed from the influence of other arts. The dramatic elements, the plastic and phantastic, which, subordinated at first,

CHRISTOPH WILLIBALD GLUCK

found their expression in 'laments' and in *simile* arias (in which a mood was compared to a phenomena of nature), then in *ombra* scenes, where spirits were invoked, and in similar exalted situations, gradually became more and more prominent, foreshadowing the time when the portrayal of human passions was to become once more the chief purpose of opera.

IV

The last and decisive step in the revolution was the coming of Gluck. 'It seems as if a century had worked to the limit of its strength to produce the flower of Gluck—the great man is always the composite genius of all the confluent temporal streams.' * Yet he himself was one of these composite forces from which the artistic purpose of his life was evolved. The Gluck of the first five decades, the Gluck of Italian opera, of what we may call the Metastasio period, was simply one of the many Italians unconsciously working toward that end. His work through two-thirds of his life had no more significance than that of a Leo, a Vinci, or a Jommelli. Fate willed, however, that Gluck should be impressed more strongly by the growing public dissatisfaction with senseless Italian opera, and incidentally should be brought into close contact with varied influences tending to the broadening of his ideas. Cosmopolite that he was, he gathered the essence of European musical culture from its four corners. Born in Germany, he was early exposed to the influence of solid musicianship; trained in Italy he gained, like Handel, its sensuous melody; in England he heard the works of Handel and received in the shape of artistic failure that chastisement which opened his mind to radical change of method. In France, soon after, he was im-

* Oskar Bie; *Die Oper* (1914).

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

pressed with the plastic dramatic element of the monumental Lully-Rameau opera. Back in Vienna, he produced *opéra comique* and held converse with lettered enthusiasts. Calzabigi, like Rinuccini in 1600, brought literary ideas of reform. Metastasio was relegated—yet not at once, for Gluck was careful, diplomatic. He fed his reform to the public in single doses—diluted for greater security, interspersed with Italian operas of the old school as sops to the hostile singers, jealous of their power. Only thus can we explain his relapses into the current type. He knew his public must first be educated. He felt the authority of a teacher and he resorted to the didactic methods of Florence—of his colleagues of 1600, whom Calzabigi knew and copied. Prefaces explaining the author's purpose once more became the order of the day; finally the reformer was conscious of being a reformer, of his true life mission. Except for what human interest there is in his early life we may therefore pass rapidly over the period preceding 1762, the momentous year of *Orfeo ed Euridice*.

Born July 2, 1714, at Weidenwang, in the upper Palatinate, Christoph Willibald Gluck's early years were passed in the forests of Bavaria and Bohemia. His father, Alexander Gluck, had been a game-keeper, who, having established himself in Bohemia in 1717, had successively entered the employ of various territorial magnates—Count Kaunitz in Neuschloss, Count Kinsky in Kamnitz, Prince Lobkowitz in Eisenberg, and, finally, the grand-duchess of Tuscany in Reichstadt. His intention toward his son had been at first to make of him a gamekeeper, and it is recorded that young Christoph was put through a course of Spartan discipline with that end in view, during which he was obliged to accompany his father barefooted through the forest in the severest winter weather.

From the age of twelve to eighteen, however, he at-

Birthplace of Gluck at Weidenwang (Central Franconia)

Birthplace of Glück at Weidenhausen (Central Franconia)



GLUCK'S METASTASIO PERIOD

tended the Jesuit school at Kommotau in the neighborhood of the Lobkowitz estate and there, besides receiving a good general education, he learned to sing and play the violin and the 'cello, as well as the clavichord and organ. In 1732 he went to Prague and studied under Czernohorsky.* Here he was soon able to earn a modest living—a welcome circumstance, for there were six younger children at home, for whom his father provided with difficulty. In Prague he gave lessons in singing and on the 'cello; he played and sang in various churches; and on holidays made the rounds of the neighboring country as a fiddler, receiving his payment in kind, for the good villagers, it is said, often rewarded him with fresh eggs. Through the introductions of his patron, Prince Lobkowitz, it was not long before he obtained access to the homes of the music-loving Bohemian nobility, and when he went to Vienna in 1736 he was hospitably received in his protector's palace. Prince Lobkowitz also made it possible for him to begin the study of composition. In Vienna he chanced to meet the Italian Prince Melzi, who was so pleased with his singing and playing that he made him his chamber musician and took him with him to Milan. Here, during four years, from 1737 to 1741, Gluck studied the theory of music under the celebrated contrapuntist Giovanni Battista Sammartini, and definitely decided upon musical composition as a career.

His studies completed, he made his début as a creative artist at the age of twenty-seven, with the opera *Artaserse* (Milan, 1741), set to a libretto of Metastasio. It was the first of thirty Italian operas, composition of which extended over a period of twenty years, and which are now totally forgotten. The success of *Ar-*

* Bohuslav Czernohorsky (1684-1740) was a Franciscan monk, native of Bohemia, but successively choirmaster in Padua and Assisi, where Tartini was his pupil. He was highly esteemed as an ecclesiastical composer. At the time when Gluck was his pupil he was director of the music at St. Jacob's, Prague.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

taserse was instantaneous. We need not explain the reasons for this success, nor the circumstances that, together with its fellows, from *Demofonte* to *La finta schiava*, it has fallen into oblivion.

His Italian successes procured for him, however, an invitation in 1745 to visit London and compose for the Haymarket. Thither he went, and produced a new opera, *La caduta de' giganti*, which, though it earned the high praise of Burney, was coldly received by the public. A revised version of an earlier opera, *Artamene*, was somewhat more successful, but *Piramo e Tisbe*, a *pasticcio* (a kind of dramatic potpourri or medley, often made up of selections from a number of operas), fell flat. 'Gluck knows no more counterpoint than my cook,' Handel is reported to have said—but then, Handel's cook was an excellent bassist and sang in many of the composer's own operas. Counterpoint, it is true, was not Gluck's forte, and the lack of depth of harmonic expression which characterized his early work was no doubt due to the want of contrapuntal knowledge. Handel quite naturally received Gluck with a somewhat negligent kindness. Gluck, on the other hand, always preserved the greatest admiration for him—we are told that he hung the master's picture over his bed. Not only the acquaintance of Handel, whose influence is clearly felt in his later works, but the musical atmosphere of the English capital must have been of benefit to him.

Perhaps the most valuable lesson of his life was the London failure of *Piramo e Tisbe*. He was astonished that this *pasticcio*, which presented a number of the most popular airs of his operas, was so unappreciated. After thinking it over he may well have concluded that all music properly deserving of the name should be the fitting expression of a situation; this vital quality lacking, in spite of melodic splendor and harmonic richness and originality, what remained would be no

GLUCK'S METASTASIO PERIOD

more than a meaningless arrangement of sounds, which might tickle the ear pleasantly, but would have no emotional power. A short trip to Paris afforded him an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the classic traditions of the French opera as developed by Lully and Rameau. Lully, it will be remembered, more nearly maintained the ideals of the early Florentines than their own immediate successors. In his operas the orchestra assumed a considerable importance, the overture took a stately though conventional aspect. The chorus and the ballet furnished a plastic background to the drama and, indeed, had become integral features. Rameau had added harmonic depth and variety and given a new charm to the graceful dance melodies. Gluck must have absorbed some or all of this; yet, for fifteen years following his visit to London, he continued to compose in the stereotyped form of the Italian opera. He did not, it is true, return to Italy, but he joined a travelling Italian opera company conducted by Pietro Mingotti, as musical director and composer. One of his contributions to its repertoire was *Le nozze d'Ercole e d'Ebe*, which was performed in the gardens of the Castle of Pillnitz (near Dresden) to celebrate the marriage of the Saxon princess and the Elector of Bavaria in June, 1747. How blunted Gluck's artistic sense must have been toward the incongruities of Italian opera is shown by the fact that the part of Hercules in this work was written for a soprano and sung by a woman. In others the rôles of Agamemnon the 'king of men,' of demigods and heroes were trilled by artificial sopranos.

After sundry wanderings Gluck established himself in Vienna, where in 1748 his *Semiramide riconosciuta* had been performed to celebrate the birthday of the Empress Maria Theresa. It was an *opera seria* of the usual type and, though terribly confused, it revealed at times the power and sweep characteristic of Handel.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

In Vienna Gluck fell in love with Marianna Pergin, the daughter of a wealthy merchant whose father would not consent to the marriage. The story that his sweetheart had vowed to be true to him and that he wandered to Italy disguised as a Capucin to save expenses in order to produce his *Telemacco* for the Argentina Theatre in Rome has no foundation. But at any rate the couple were finally married in 1750, after the death of the relentless father. This signalized the close of Gluck's nomadic existence. With his permanent residence in Vienna began a new epoch in his life. Vienna was at that time a literary, musical, and social centre of importance, a home of all the arts. The reigning family of Hapsburg was an uncommonly musical one; the empress, her father, her husband (Francis of Lorraine), and her daughters were all music lovers. Maria Theresa herself sang in the operatic performances at her private theatre. Joseph II played the 'cello in its orchestra. The court chapel had its band, the cathedral its choir and four organists. In the Hofburg and at the rustic palace of Schönbrunn music was a favorite diversion of the court, cultivated alike by the Austrian and the Hungarian nobility. The royal opera houses at Launburg and Schönbrunn placed in their service a long series of the famous opera composers.

Semiramide had recommended its composer to the favor of Maria Theresa, his star was in the ascendant. In September, 1754, his comic opera *Le Chinesse*, with its tragic-comic ballet, *L'Orfano della China*, performed at the countryseat of the Duke of Saxe-Hildburghausen in the presence of the emperor and court, gave such pleasure that its author was definitely attached to the court opera at a salary of two thousand ducats a year. His wealthy marriage and his increasing reputation, instead of tempting him to indulge in luxurious ease, spurred him to increased exertions. He added to the

THE COMIC OPERA IN FRANCE

sum total of his knowledge by studies of every kind—literary, poetic, and linguistic—and his home became a meeting place for the *beaux esprits* of art and science. He wrote several more operas to librettos by Metastasio, witnessed the triumph of two of them in Rome, after which he was able to return to Vienna, a *cavaliere dello sperone d'oro* (knight of the golden spur), this distinction having been conferred upon him by the Pope. Henceforth he called himself *Chevalier* or *Ritter* (not *von*) Gluck.

V

For the sake of continuity we are obliged at this point to resume the thread of our remarks concerning the *opera buffa* of Pergolesi. In 1752, about the time of Gluck's official engagement at the Vienna opera, an Italian troupe of 'buffonists' introduced in Paris *La serva padrona* and *Il maestro in musica* (Pergolesi's only other comic opera). Their success was sensational, and, having come at a psychological moment, far-reaching in results, for it gave the impulse to a new school, popular to this day—that of the French *opéra comique*, at first called *opera bouffon*.

The latter part of the eighteenth century had witnessed the birth of a new intellectual ideal in France, essentially different from those associated with the preceding movements of the Renaissance and the Reformation. Neither antiquity nor the Bible were in future to be the court of last instance, but judgment and decision over all things was referred to the individual. This theory, and others laid down by the encyclopedists—the philosophers of the time—reacted equally on all the arts. New theories concerning music were advanced by laymen. Batteaux had already insisted that poetry, music, and the dance were, by very nature, intended to unite; Diderot and Rousseau con-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

ceived the idea of the unified work of art. Jean Jaques Rousseau,* the intellectual dictator, who laid a rather exaggerated claim to musical knowledge, and the famous satirist, Baron Melchior Grimm, now began a literary tirade against the old musical tragedy of France, which, like the Italian opera, had become paralyzed into mere formulas. Rousseau, who had shortly before written a comic opera, *Le devin du village* (The Village Seer), in French, now denounced the French language, with delightful inconsistency, as unfit to sing; Grimm in his pamphlet, *Le petit prophète de Boehmisch-Broda*, threatened the French people with dire consequences if they did not abandon French opera for Italian *opera buffa*.† This precipitated the widespread controversy between Buffonists and anti-Buffonists, known as the *Guerre des bouffons*, which, in this age of pamphleteers, of theorists, and revolutionary agitators, soon assumed political significance. The conservatives hastened to uphold Rameau and the cause of native art; the revolutionists rallied to the support of the Italians. Marmontel, Favart, and others set themselves to write after the Italian model, 'Duni brought from Parma his *Ninette à la cour* and followed it in 1757 with *Le peintre amoureux*; Monsigny ‡ left

* Born 1712; died 1778. Though not a trained musician he evinced a lively interest in the art from his youth. Besides his *Devin du village*, which remained in the French operatic repertoire for sixty years, he wrote a ballet opera, *Les Muses galantes*, and fragments of an opera, *Daphnis et Chloë*! His lyrical scene, *Pygmalion*, set to music first by Coignet, then by Asplmayr, was the point of departure of the so-called 'melodrama' (spoken dialogue with musical accompaniment). He also wrote a *Dictionnaire de musique* (1767).

† *Le petit prophète de Boehmisch-Broda* has been identified by historians with the founder of the Mannheim school, Johann Stamitz, for the latter was born in Deutsch-Brod (Bohemia), and but two years before had set Paris by the ears with his orchestral 'sonatas.' The hero of the Grimm pamphlet is a poor musician, who by dream magic is transferred from his bare attic chamber to the glittering hall of the Paris opera. He turns away, aghast at the heartlessness of the spectacle and music.

‡ Pierre Alexandre Monsigny, born near St. Omer, 1729, died, Paris, 1817. *Les aveux indiscrets* (1759); *Le cadi dupé* (1760); *On ne s'avise jamais de tout* (1761); *Rose et Colas* (1764), etc., are his chief successes in opera comique.

GLUCK'S REFORM

his bureau and Philidor * his chess table to follow the footsteps of Pergolesi; lastly came Grétry from Rome and killed the old French operatic style with *Le Tableau parlant* and *Zemire et Azor*! The result was the production of a veritable flood of pleasing, delightful operettas dealing with petty love intrigues, mostly of pastoral character, in place of the stale, mythological subjects common to French and Italian opera alike. The new school quickly strengthened its hand and improved its output. Its permanent value lay, of course, in the infusion of new vitality into operatic composition in general, a rejuvenation of the poetic as well as musical technique, the unlocking of a whole treasure of subjects hitherto unused.

Gluck at Vienna, already acquainted with French opera, was quick to see the value of this new *genre*, and he produced, in alternation with his Italian operas, a number of these works, partly with interpolations of his own, partly rewritten by him in their entirety. Among the latter class must be named *La fausse esclave* (1758); *L'île de Merlin* (1758); *L'arbre enchantée* (1759); *L'ivrogne corrigé* (1760); *Le cadi dupé* (1761); and *La recontre imprévue* (1764). As Riemann suggests, it is not accidental that Gluck's idea to reform the conventionalized opera dates from this period of intensive occupation with the French *opéra bouffon*. There is no question that the simpler, more natural art, and the genuineness and sincerity of the comic opera were largely instrumental in the fruition of his theories. His only extended effort during the period from 1756 to 1762 was a pantomimic ballet, *Don Giovanni*, but the melodramas and symphonies (or overtures) writ-

* François-André-Danican Philidor, born, Dreux, 1726; died, London, 1795. Talented as a chess player he entered international contests successfully, and wrote an analysis of the game. His love for composition awoke suddenly and he made his comic-opera début in 1759. His best works are: *Le maréchal fêrant* (1761); *Tom Jones* (1765), which brought an innovation—the *a capelli* vocal quartet; and *Ernelinde, princesse de Norvège* (1767), a grand opera.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

ten for the private entertainment of the imperial family, as well as seven trio sonatas, varied in expression and at times quite modern in spirit, also date from this time. It is well to remember also that this was a period of great activity in instrumental composition; that the Mannheim school of symphonists was just then at the height of its accomplishment.

Gluck's first reform opera, *Orfeo ed Euridice*, appeared in 1762. The young Italian poet and dramatist, Raniero da Calzabigi, supplied the text. Calzabigi, though at first a follower of Metastasio, had conceived a violent dislike for that librettist and his work. A hot-headed theorist, he undoubtedly influenced Gluck in the adoption of a new style, perhaps even gave the actual initiative to the change. The idea was not sudden. We have already pointed out how the later Neapolitans had contributed elements of reform and had paved the way in many particulars. They had not, however, like Gluck, attacked the root of the evil—the text. Metastasio's texts were made to suit only the old manner; Calzabigi's were designed to a different purpose: the unified, consistent expression of a definite dramatic scheme. In the prefaces which accompanied their next two essays in the new style, *Alceste* and *Paride*, Gluck reverted to almost the very wording of Peri and Caccini, but nevertheless no reaction to the representative style of 1600 was intended. Though he spoke of 'forgetting his musicianship,' he did not deny himself all sensuous melodic flow in favor of a *parlando* recitative. Too much water had flowed under the bridges since 1600 for that. Scarlatti and his school had not wrought wholly in vain. But the coloratura outrage, the concert-opera, saw the beginning of its end. The *da capo* aria was discarded altogether, the chorus was reintroduced, and the subordination of music to dramatic expression became the predominating principle. Artificial sopranos and autocratic *prime*

'ORFEO ED EURIDICE'

donne could find no chance to rule in such a scheme; their doom was certain and it was near. In the war that ensued, which meant their eventual extinction, Gluck found a powerful ally in the person of the emperor, Francis I.

In that sovereign's presence *Orfeo* was first given at the *Hofburgtheater* in Vienna. Its mythological subject—the same that Ariosti treated in his *favolo* of 1574, that Peri made the theme of his epoch-making drama of 1600, that Monteverdi chose for his Mantuan début in 1607—was surely as appropriate for this new reformer's first experiment as it was suited to the classic simplicity and grandeur of his music. The opera was studied with the greatest care, Gluck himself directing all the rehearsals, and the participating artists forgot that they were virtuosi in order better to grasp the spirit of the work. It was mounted with all the skill that the stagecraft of the day afforded. Although it did not entirely break with tradition and was not altogether free of the empty formulas from which the composer tried to escape, it was too new to conquer the sympathies of the Viennese public at once. Indeed, the innovations were radical enough to cause trepidations in Gluck's own mind. His strong feelings that the novelty of *Orfeo* might prevent its success induced him to secure the neutrality of Metastasio before its first performance, and his promise not to take sides against it openly.

Gluck's music is as fresh to-day as when it was written. Its beauty and truth seemed far too serious to many of his contemporaries. People at first said that it was tiresome; and Burney declared that 'the subordination of music to poetry is a principle that holds good only for the countries whose singers are bad.' But after five performances the triumph of *Orfeo* was assured and its fame spread even to Italy. Rousseau said of it: 'I know of nothing so perfect in all

'A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

that regards what is called fitness, as the ensemble in the Elysian fields. Everywhere the enjoyment of pure and calm happiness is evident, but so equable is its character that there is nothing either in the songs or in the dance airs that in the slightest degree exceeds its just measure.' The first two acts of *Orfeo* are profoundly human, with their dual picture of tender sorrow and eternal joy. The grief of the poet and the lamentations of his shepherd companions, rising in mournful choral strains, insistent in their reiteration of the motive indicative of their sorrow, are as effective in their way as the musical language of Wagner, even though they lack the force of modern harmony and orchestral sonority. The principle is fundamentally the same. Nor is Gluck's music entirely devoid of the dramatic force which has come to music with the growth of the modern orchestra. Much of the delineation of mood and emotion is left to the instruments. Later, in the preface to *Alceste*, Gluck declared that the overture should be in accord with the contents of the opera and should serve as a preparation for it—a simple, natural maxim to which composers had been almost wholly blind up to that time. In Gluck's overtures we see, in fact, no Italian, but a German, influence. They partake strongly of the nature of the first movements of the Mannheim symphonies, showing a contrasting second theme and are clearly divided into three parts, like the sonata form. Thus the new instrumental style was early introduced into the opera through Gluck's initiation, and thence was to be transferred to the overtures of Mozart, Sacchini, Cherubini, and others.

In 1764 *Orfeo* was given in Frankfort-on-the-Main for the coronation of the Archduke Joseph as Roman king. The imperial family seems to have been sympathetically appreciative of Gluck's efforts with the new style; but nevertheless his next work, *Telemacco*, pro-

‘ALCESTE’

duced at the Burgtheater in January, 1765, though considered the best of his Italian operas, was a peculiar mixture of the stereotype and the new, as if for a time he lacked confidence. Quite different was the case of *Alceste* (Hofburgtheater, Dec. 16, 1767). In this, his second classic music drama, the composer carried out the reforms begun in *Orfeo* more boldly and more consistently. Calzabigi again wrote the text. The music was neither so full of color nor so poetic as that of its predecessor, yet was more sustained and equal in beauty. The orchestration is somewhat fuller; the recitatives have gained in expressiveness; there are effects of great dramatic intensity, and arias of severe grandeur. Berlioz called *Alceste's* aria ‘Ye gods of endless night’ the perfect manifestation of Gluck’s genius. Like *Orfeo*, *Alceste* was admirably performed, and again opinions differed greatly regarding it. Sonnenfels * wrote after the performance: ‘I find myself in wonderland. A serious opera without *castrati*, music without *solfeggios*, or, I might rather say, without gurgling; an Italian poem without pathos or banality. With this threefold work of wonder the stage near the Hofburg has been reopened.’ On the other hand, there were heard in the parterre such comments as ‘It is meant to call forth tears—I may shed a few—of *ennui*’; ‘Nine days without a performance, and then a requiem mass’; or ‘A splendid two gulden’s worth of entertainment—a fool who dies for her husband.’ This last is quite in keeping with the sentiment of the eighteenth century in regard to conjugal affection. It took a long while for the public to accustom itself to the austerity and tragic grandeur of this ‘tragedy set to music,’ as its author called it. Yet *Alceste* in its dual form (for the French edition represents a complete reworking of

* Sonnenfels, a contemporary Viennese critic, was active in his endeavors to uplift the German stage. (*Briefe über die Wienerische Schaubühne*, Vienna, 1768.)

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

its original) is Gluck's masterpiece, and it still remains one of the greatest classical operas.

Three years after *Alceste* came *Paride ed Elena* (Nov. 30, 1770), a 'drama for music.' In the preface of the work, dedicated to the duke of Braganza, Gluck again emphasized his beliefs. Among other things he wrote: 'The more we seek to attain truth and perfection the greater the need of positiveness and accuracy. The lines that distinguish the work of Raphael from that of the average painter are hardly noticeable, yet any change of an outline, though it may not destroy resemblance in a caricature, completely deforms a beautiful female head. Only a slight alteration in the mode of expression is needed to turn my aria *Che faro senza Euridice* into a dance for marionettes.' *Paride ed Elena*, constructed on the principles of *Orfeo* and *Alceste*, is the least important of Gluck's operas and the least known. The libretto lacks action, but the score is interesting because of its lyric and romantic character. Much of its style seems to anticipate the new influences which Mozart afterward brought to German music. It also offers the first instance of what might be called local color in its contrasting choruses of Greeks and Asiatics.

It is interesting to note that at the time of composing the lyrical 'Alceste' Gluck was also preparing for French opera with vocal romances, *Lieder*. His collection of songs set to Klopstock's odes was written in 1770. They have not much artistic value, but they are among the earliest examples of the *Lied* as Mozart and Beethoven later conceived it, a simple song melody whose mission is frankly limited to a faithful emphasis of a lyrical mood. Conceived in the spirit of Rousseau, they are spontaneous and make an unaffected appeal to the ear. The style is nearer that of French *opéra comique*, at which Gluck had already tried his hand,

GLUCK'S PARIS PERIOD

thus obtaining an exact knowledge of the spirit of the French language and of its lyrical resources.

VI

The wish of Gluck's heart was to carry to completion the reforms he had initiated, but Germany had practically declared against them. His musical and literary adversaries at the Viennese court, Hasse and Metastasio, had formed a strong opposition. Baron Grimm spoke of Gluck's reforms as the work of a barbarian. Agricola, Kirnberger, and Forkel were opposed to them. In Prussia, Frederick the Great had a few arias from *Alceste* and *Orfeo* sung in concert, and decided that the composer 'had no song and understood nothing of the grand opera style,' an opinion which, of course, prevented the performance of his operas in Berlin. In view of all this it is not surprising that he should turn to what was then the centre of intellectual life, that he should seize the opportunity to secure recognition for his art in the great home of the drama—in Paris.

Let us recall for a moment Gluck's connection with the French *opéra bouffon*. Favart had complimented him, in a letter to the Vienna opera director Durazzo, for the excellence of his French 'declamation.' Evidently Gluck and his friend Le Blanc du Roullet, attaché of the French embassy, had kept track of the *Guerre des bouffons*, and had taken advantage of the psychology of the moment, for Rameau had died in 1764 and the consequent weakening of the National party had resulted in the victory of the Buffonists. Du Roullet suggested to Gluck and Calzabigi that they collaborate upon a French subject for an opera, and chose Racine's *Iphigénie*. The opera was completed and the text translated by du Roullet, who now wrote a very diplo-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

matic letter to the authorities of the Académie royale (the Paris opera). It recounted how the Chevalier Gluck, celebrated throughout Europe, admired the French style of composition, preferred it, indeed, to the Italian; how he regarded the French language as eminently suited to musical treatment, and that he had just finished a new work in French on a tragedy of the immortal Racine, which exhausted all the powers of art, simple, natural song, enchanting melody, recitative equal to the French, dance pieces of the most alluring freshness. Here was everything to delight a Frenchman's heart; besides, his opera had been a great financial success in Bologna, and so valiant a defender of the French tongue should be given an opportunity in its own home.

The academy saw a new hope in this. It considered the letter in official session, and cautiously asked to see an act of *Iphigénie*. After examination of it Gluck was promised an engagement if he would agree to write six operas like it. This condition, almost impossible of acceptance for a man of Gluck's age, was finally removed through the intercession of Marie Antoinette, now dauphiness of France, Gluck's erstwhile pupil in Vienna.

Gluck was invited to come to Paris as the guest of the Académie and direct the staging of *Iphigénie*. He arrived there with his wife and niece * in the summer of 1773. Lodged in the citadel of the anti-Buffonists, he incurred in advance the opposition of the Italian party, but, diplomat that he was, he at once set about to propitiate the enemy. Rousseau, the intellectual potentate of France, was eventually won over; but, despite the fact that Gluck's music was essentially human and should have fulfilled the demands of the

* Gluck's marriage was childless, but he had adopted a niece, Marianne Gluck, who had a pretty voice and pursued her musical training under his care. Both Gluck's wife and niece usually accompanied him in his travels.

THE TWO 'IPHIGÉNIES'

'encyclopedists,' such men as Marmontel, La Harpe, and d'Alambert were arrayed against him, together with the entire Italian party and many of the followers of the old French school, who refused to accept him as the successor of Lully and Rameau. Mme. du Barry was one of these. Marie Antoinette, on the other hand, constituted herself Gluck's protector. It was the *Guerre des bouffons* at its climax.

The *première* of *Iphigénie en Aulide* (April, 1774) was awaited with the greatest impatience. Gluck had spared no pains in the preparation. He drilled the singers, spoiled by public favor, with the greatest vigor, and ruthlessly combatted their caprices. The obstacles were many: Legras was ill; Larivée, the Agamemnon, did not understand his part; Sophie Arnold, known as the greatest singing actress of her day, sang out of tune; Vestris, the greatest dancer of his time—he was called the 'God of the Dance'—was not satisfied with his part in the ballet of the opera. 'Then dance in heaven, if you're the god of the dance,' cried Gluck, 'but not in my opera!' And when the terpsichorean divinity insisted on concluding *Iphigénie* with a *chaconne*, he scornfully asked: 'Did the Greeks dance *chaconnes*?' Gluck threatened more than once to withdraw his opera, yielding only to the persuasions of the dauphiness.

The second performance of the opera determined its triumph, a triumph which in a manner made Paris the centre of music in Europe.* Marie Antoinette even wrote to her sister Marie Christine to express her pleasure. Gluck received an honorarium of 20,000 francs and was promised a life pension. Less severe and sol-

* After *Iphigénie en Aulide* Paris became the international centre of operatic composition. London was more in the nature of an exchange, where it was possible for artists to win a good deal of money quickly and easily; the glory of the great Italian stages dimmed more and more, and Vienna, Dresden, Berlin, and Munich were only locally important. Operatic control passed from the Italian to the French stage at the same time German instrumental composition began its victories.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

emn than *Alceste*, *Iphigénie en Aulide* and *Iphigénie en Tauride* (written ten years later to a libretto by Guillard and not heard until May 18, 1779) were the favorites of town and court up to the very end of the *ancien régime*. Not only are both more appealing and less sombre, but they are also more delicate in form, more simple in sentiment, and more intimate than *Alceste*.

Gluck's fame was now universal. Voltaire, the oracle of France, had pronounced in his favor. The nobility sought his society, the courtiers waited on him. Even princes hastened, when he laid down his bâton, to hand him the peruke and surcoat cast aside while conducting. A strong well-built man, bullet-headed, with a red, pockmarked face and small gray, but brilliant, eyes; richly and fashionably dressed; independent in his manner; jealous of his liberty; opinionated, yet witty and amiable, this revolutionary à la Rousseau, this 'plebeian genius' completely conquered all affections of Parisian society. He was at home everywhere; every salon lionized him, he was a familiar figure at the *levers* of Marie Antoinette.

In August, 1774, a French version of *Orfeo*, extensively revised, was heard and acclaimed. This confirmed the victory—the anti-Gluckists were vanquished for the time. But a permanent connection with the Paris opera did not at once result for Gluck, and the next year he returned to Vienna, taking with him two old opera texts by Quinault—Lully's librettist—*Roland* and *Armide*, which the *Académie* had commissioned him to set. He set to music only the latter of the two poems, for, when he learned that Piccini likewise had been asked to set the *Roland*, and had been invited to Paris by Marie Antoinette, he destroyed his sketches. An older light operetta, *Cythère assiégée*, which he recast and foolishly dispatched to Paris, thoroughly displeased the Parisians. The opposition was quick to seize its advantage. It looked about for a leader and

GLUCK AND PICCINI

found him in Piccini, now at the head of the great Neapolitan school. He was induced to come to Paris by tempting promises, but was so ill-served by circumstances that, in spite of the manœuvres and the intrigues of his partisans, his *Roland* was not given until 1778.

On April 23, 1776, Gluck directed the first performance of his new French version of *Alceste*. It was hissed. In despair Gluck rushed from the opera house and exclaimed to Rousseau: '*Alceste* has fallen!' 'Yes,' was the answer, 'but it has fallen from the skies!' In 1777 came *Armide*. In this opera Gluck thought he had written sensuous music.* It no longer makes this impression—the passion of 'Tristan,' the oriental voluptuousness of the *Scheherazade* of Rimsky-Korsakov, and the eroticism of modern dramatic scores have somewhat cooled the warmth of the love music of *Armide*. On the other hand, the passion of hatred is delineated in this opera powerfully and vigorously enough for modern appreciation. *Armide* is beautiful throughout by reason of its sincerity.

Piccini's *Roland* followed *Alceste* in a few months, January, 1778. It was a success, but only a temporary one. After twelve well-attended performances it ceased to draw. Nevertheless it fanned the flame of controversy. The fight of Gluckists and Piccinnists, in continuation of the *Guerre des bouffons*, of which the principals, by the way, were quite innocent, was at its height. Men addressed each other with the challenge 'Êtes-vous Gluckiste ou Piccinniste?' Piccini was placed at the head of an Italian troupe which was engaged to give performances on alternate nights at the *Académie*. The two 'parties' were now on equal

* Gluck declared that the music of *Armide* was intended 'to give a voluptuous sensation,' and La Harpe's assertion that he had made *Armide* a sorceress rather than an enchantress, and that her part was '*une criallerie monotone et fatigante*,' drew forth as bitter a reply from the composer as Wagner ever wrote to his critics.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

footing. Finally it occurred to the director to have the two rivals treat the same subject and he selected Racine's *Iphigénie en Tauride*. Piccini was handicapped from the start. His text was bad, neither his talent nor his experience was so suited to the task as Gluck's. The latter's version was ready in May, 1779, and was a brilliant success. According to the *Mercure de France* no opera had ever made so strong and so universal an impression upon the public. 'Pure musical beauty as sweet as that of *Orfeo*, tragic intensity deeper than that of *Alceste*, a firm touch, an undaunted courage, a new subtlety of psychological insight, all combine to form a masterpiece such as throughout its entire history the operatic stage has never known.' Piccini, who meantime had produced his *Atys*, brought out his *Iphigénie* in January, 1781. Despite many excellences it was bound to be anti-climax to Gluck's. Needless to say it admits of no comparison.

Too great stress has often been laid on the quarrels of the 'Gluckists' and 'Piccinnists,' which, it is true, went to absurd lengths. As is usually the case with partisanship in art, the chief characters themselves were not personal enemies. The Italian sympathizers merely took up the cry which the Buffonists had formerly raised against the opera of Rameau. According to them Gluck's music was made up of too much noise and not enough song. 'But the Buffonist agitation had been justified by results; it had produced the *opéra comique*, which had assimilated what it could use of the Italian *opera buffa*.' Not so this new controversy. Hence, despite a few days of glory for Piccini, his party was not able to reawaken in France a taste for the superficial charm of Italian music. 'The crowd is for Gluck,' sighed La Harpe. And when, after the glorious success of *Iphigénie en Tauride*, Piccini's *Didon* was given in 1783, it owed the favor with which it was

GLUCK'S MISSION

received largely to the fact that in style and expression it followed Gluck's model.

In 1780, six months after the *Iphigénie* première, Gluck retired to Vienna to end his days in dignified and wealthy leisure. He had accomplished his task, fulfilled the wish of his heart. In his comfortable retreat he learned of the failure of Piccini's *Iphigénie en Tauride*, while his own was given for the 151st time on April 2, 1782! He also enjoyed the satisfaction of knowing that *Les Danaïdes*, the opera written by his disciple and pupil, Antonio Salieri, justified the truth of his theories by its success on the Paris stage in 1784. It was this pupil, who, consulting Gluck on the question of whether to write the rôle of Christ in the tenor in his cantata 'The Last Judgment,' received the answer, half in jest, half in earnest, 'I'll be able before long to let you know from the beyond how the Saviour speaks.' A few days after, on Nov. 15, 1787, the master breathed his last, having suffered an apoplectic stroke.

The inscription on his tomb, 'Here rests a righteous German man, an ardent Christian, a faithful husband, Christoph Ritter Gluck, the great master of the sublime art of tone' emphasizes the strongly moral side of his character. For all his shrewdness and solicitude for his own material welfare, his music is ample proof of his nobility of soul; its loftiness, purity, unaffected simplicity reflect the virtues for which men are universally respected.

In its essence Gluck's music may be considered the expression of the classic ideal, the 'naturalism' and 'new humanism' of Rousseau, which idealized the old Greek world and aimed to inculcate the Greek spirit; courage and keenness in quest of truth and devotion to the beautiful. The leading characteristics of his style have been aptly defined as the 'realistic notation of the pathetic accent and passing movement, and the subordination of the purely musical element to dramatic ex-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

pression.' 'I shall try,' he wrote in the preface to *Alceste*, 'to reduce music to its own function, that of seconding poetry by intensifying the expression of sentiments and the interest of situations without interrupting the action by needless ornament. I have accordingly taken great care not to interrupt the singer in the heat of the dialogue and make him wait for a tedious *ritornel*, nor do I allow him to stop on a sonorous vowel, in the middle of a phrase, in order to show the agility of a beautiful voice in a long cadenza. I also believed it my duty to try to secure, to the best of my power, a fine simplicity; therefore I have avoided a display of difficulties which destroy clarity. I have never laid stress on aught that was new, where it was not conditioned in a natural manner by situation and expression; and there is no rule which I have not been willing to sacrifice with good grace for the sake of the effect. These are my principles.' The inscription, *Il préféra les Muses aux Sirènes* (He chose the Muses rather than the Sirens), beneath an old French copperplate of Gluck, dating from 1781, sounds the keynote of his artistic character. A prophet of the true and beautiful in music, he disdained to listen for long to the tempting voices which counselled him to prefer the easy rewards of popular success to the struggles and uncertainties involved in the pursuit of a high ideal. And, when the hour came, he was ready to reject the appeal of external charm and mere virtuosity and to lead dramatic musical art back to its natural sources.

VII

Gluck's immediate influence was not nearly as widespread as his reforms were momentous. It is true that his music, reverting to simpler structures and depending on subtler interpretation for its effects put an end

SALIERI AND SARTI

to the absolute rule of *prime uomini* and *prime donne*, but, while some of its elements found their way into the work of his more conventional contemporaries, his example seems not to have been wholly followed by any of them. His dramatic teachings, too, while they could not fail to be absorbed by the composers, were not adopted without reserve by any one except his immediate pupil Salieri, who promptly reverted to the Italian style after his first successes. Gluck was not a true propagandist and never gathered about him disciples who would spread his teachings—in short he did not found a ‘school.’ Even in France, where his principles had the weight of official sanction, apostasy was rife, and Rossini and Meyerbeer were probably more appreciated than their more austere predecessor. His influence was far-reaching rather than immediate. It remained for Wagner to take up the thread of reasoning where Gluck left off and with multiplied resources, musically and mechanically, with the way prepared by literary forces, and himself equipped with rare controversial powers, demonstrate the truths which his predecessor could only assert.

Antonio Salieri (1750-1825) with *Les Danaïdes*, in 1781, achieved a notable success in frank imitation of Gluck’s manner; indeed, the work, originally intrusted to Gluck by the Académie de Musique, was, with doubtful strategy, brought out as that master’s work, and in consequence brought Salieri fame and fortune. Other facts in Salieri’s life seem to bear out similar imperfections of character. He was, however, a musician of high artistic principles. When in 1787 *Tarare* was produced in Paris it met with an overwhelming success, but Salieri nevertheless withdrew it after a time and partially rewrote it for its Vienna production, under the title of *Axur, Ré d’Ormus*. ‘There have been many instances in which an artist has been taught by failure that second thoughts are best; there are not many in

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

which he has learned the lesson from popular approbation.' * Salieri's career is synchronous with Mozart's, whom he outlived, and against whom he intrigued in ungenerous manner at the Viennese court, where he became kapellmeister in 1788. He profited by his rival's example, moreover, but his music 'falls between the methods of his two great contemporaries, it is less dramatic than Gluck's and it has less melodic genuineness than Mozart's.'

Prominent among those who adhered to Italian operatic tradition was Giuseppe Sarti (1729-1802), 'a composer of real invention, and a brilliant and audacious master of the orchestra.' We have W. H. Hadow's authority for the assertion that he first used devices which are usually credited to Berlioz and Wagner, such as the use of muted trumpets and clarinets and certain experiments in the combination of instrumental colors. Sarti achieved truly international renown; from 1755 to 1775 he was at the court of Copenhagen, where he produced twenty Italian operas, and four Danish singspiele; next he was director of the girls' conservatory in Venice and till 1784 musical director of Milan cathedral,† and from 1784 till 1787 he served Catherine II of Russia as court conductor. His famous opera, *Armida e Rinaldo*, he produced while in this post (1785), as well as a number of other works. In 1793 he founded a 'musical academy' which was the forerunner of the great St. Petersburg conservatory, and he was its director till 1801. His introduction of the 'St. Petersburg pitch' (436 vibrations for A) is but one detail of his many-sided influence.

Not the least point of Sarti's historical importance is the fact that he was the teacher of Cherubini. Luigi Cherubini occupies a peculiar position in the history

* W. H. Hadow: Oxford History of Music, Vol. V.

† During this period he produced his famous operas, *Le gelosie vilane*; *Fernace* (1776), *Achille in Sciro* (1779), *Giulio Sabino* (1781).

GRÉTRY, GOSSEC, MÉHUL

of music. Born in Florence in 1760 and confining his activities to Italy for the first twenty-eight years of his career, he later extended his influence into Germany (where Beethoven became an enthusiastic admirer) and to Paris, where he became a most important factor of musical life, especially in that most peculiarly French development—the *opéra comique*. His operatic method represents a compromise between those of his teacher, Sarti, and of Gluck, who thus indirectly exerts his influence upon comic opera. Successful as his many Italian operas—produced prior to 1786—were, they hardly deserve notice here. His Paris activities, synchronous with those of Méhul, are so closely bound up with the history of *opéra comique* that we may well consider them in that connection.

The *opéra comique*, the singspiel of France, was comic opera with spoken dialogue. Its earlier exponents, Monsigny, Philidor, and Gossec, were in various ways influenced by Gluck in their work. Grétry,* whose *Le tableau parlant*, *Les deux avares*, and *L'Amant jaloux* are 'models of lightness and brilliancy,' like Gluck 'speaks the language of the heart' in his masterpieces, *Zémire et Azor* and *Richard Cœur de Lion*, and excels in delineation of character and the expression of typically French sentiment. Grétry's appearance marked an epoch in the history of *opéra comique*. His *Mémoires* expose a dramatic creed closely related to that of Gluck, but going beyond that master in its advocacy of declamation in the place of song.

Gossec, also important as symphonist and composer of serious operas (*Philemon et Baucis*, etc.), entered the comic opera field in 1761, the year in which the Opéra Comique, known as the Salle Favart, was opened, though his real success did not come till 1766, with *Les*

* André Erneste Modeste Grétry, born, Liège, 1742; died, near Paris, 1813. 'His influence on the *opéra comique* was a lasting one; Isouard Boildieu, Auber, Adam, were his heirs.'—Riemann.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

Pêcheurs. Carried away by revolutionary fervor, he took up the composition of patriotic hymns, became officially connected with the worship of Reason, and eventually left the comic opera field to Cherubini and Méhul. Both arrived in Paris in 1778, which marks the second period of *opéra comique*.

The peaceful artistic rivalry and development of this period stand in peculiar contrast to the great political holocaust which coincides with it—the French Revolution. That upheaval was accompanied by an almost frantic search for pleasure on the part of the public, and an astounding increase in the number of theatres (seventeen were opened in 1791, the year of Louis XVI's flight, and eighteen more up to 1800). Cherubini's wife herself relates how the theatres were crowded at night after the guillotine had done its bloody work by day. Music flourished as never before and especially French music, for the storm of patriotism which swept the country made for the patronage of things French. In the very year of Robespierre's execution (1794) the *Conservatoire de Musique* was projected, an institution which has ever since remained the bulwark of French musical culture.*

In 1789 a certain Léonard, *friseur* to Marie Antoinette, was given leave to collect a company for the performance of Italian opera, and opened his theatre in a hall of the Tuileries palace with his countryman Cherubini as his musical director. The fall of the Bastille in 1794 drove them from the royal residence to a mere booth in the Foire St. Germain, where in 1792 they created the famous Théâtre Feydeau, and delighted Revolutionary audiences with Cherubini ver-

* The Paris *Conservatoire de Musique*, succeeding the Bourbon *École de chant et de déclamation* (1784) and the revolutionary *Institut National de Musique* (1793), was established 1795, with Sarrette as director and with liberal government support. Cherubini became its director in 1822, and its enormous influence on the general trend of French art dates from his administration.

LUIGI CHERUBINI

sions of Cimarosa and Paesiello operas. Here, too, *Lodoïska*, one of Cherubini's most brilliant works, was enthusiastically applauded. Meantime Étienne Méhul (b. Givet, Ardennes, 1763; d. Paris, 1817), the modest, retiring artist, who had been patiently awaiting the recognition of the *Académie* (his *Alonzo et Cora* was not produced till 1791) had become the hero of the older enterprise at the Salle Favart,* and there produced his *Euphrosine et Corradin* in 1790, followed by a series of works of which the last, *Le jeune Henri* (1797), was hissed off the stage because, in the fifth year of the revolution, it introduced a king as character—the once adored Henry IV! This was followed by a more successful series, 'whose musical force and the enchanting melodies with which they are begemmed have kept them alive.' His more serious works, notably *Stratonice*, *Athol*, and especially *Joseph*, a biblical opera, are highly esteemed. M. Tiersot considers the last-named work superior to that by Handel of the same name. Méhul was Gluck's greatest disciple—he was directly encouraged and aided by Gluck—and even surpassed his master in musical science.

Cherubini's *Médé* and *Les deux journées* were produced in 1797 and 1800, respectively. The latter 'shows a conciseness of expression and a warmth of feeling unusual to Cherubini,' says Mr. Hadow; at any rate it is better known to-day than any of the other works, and not infrequently produced both in France and Germany. It is *opéra comique* only in form, for it mixes spoken dialogue with music—its plot is serious. In this respect it furnishes a precedent for many other so-called *opéras comiques*. Cherubini's musical resources were almost unlimited, wealth of ideas is even a fault with him, having the effect of tiring the listener,

* The two theatres, after about ten years' rivalry, united as the Opéra Comique which, under government subsidy, has continued to flourish to this day.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

but his overtures are truly classic, his themes refined, and his orchestration faultless. In *Les deux journées* he abandoned the Italian traditions and confined himself practically to ensembles and choruses. He must, whatever his intrinsic value, be reckoned among the most important factors in the reformation of the opera in the direction of music drama.

Cherubini was not so fortunate as to win the favor of Napoleon, as did his colleagues, Gossec and Grétry and Méhul, all of whom received the cross of the Legion of Honor. He returned to Vienna in 1805 and there produced *Faniska*, the last and greatest of his operas, but his prospects were spoiled by the capture of Vienna and the entry of Napoleon, his enemy, at the head of the French army. He returned to France disappointed but still active, wrote church music, taught composition at the conservatory and was its director from 1821 till his death in 1842. The *opéra comique* continued meantime under the direction of Paesiello and from 1803 under Jean François Lesueur (1760-1837) 'the only other serious composer who deserves to be mentioned by the side of Méhul and Cherubini.' Lesueur's innovating ideas aroused much opposition, but he had a distinguished following. Among his pupils was Hector Berlioz.

F. H. M.

CHAPTER II

THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE CLASSIC PERIOD

Classicism and the classic period—Political and literary forces—The conflict of styles; the sonata form—The Berlin school; the sons of Bach—The Mannheim reform: the Genesis of the Symphony—Followers of the Mannheim school; rise of the string quartet; Vienna and Salzburg as musical centres.

It is impossible to assign the so-called Classic Movement to a definite period; its roots strike deep and its limits are indefinite. It gathered momentum while the ideas from which it revolted were in their ascendancy; its incipient stage was simultaneous with the reign of Italian opera. To define the meaning of classicism is as difficult as it is to fix the date of its beginning. By contrasting, as we usually do, the style of that period with a later one, usually called the Romantic, by comparing the ideal of classicism with the romantic ideal of subjective expression, we get a negative rather than a positive definition; for classicism is generally presumed to be formal, and antagonistic to that free ideal—a supposition which is not altogether exact, for it was just the reform of the classicists that opened the way to the free expressiveness which is characteristic of the 'Romantics.' On the other hand, the classic ideal of just proportions, of pure objective beauty, did find expression in the crystallized forms, the clarified technique, and the flexible articulation that superseded the unreasonably ornate, the polyphonically obscure, or the superficial, trite monotony of a great part of pre-classic music.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

I

When Gluck's *Alceste* first appeared on the boards of the Imperial Opera in 1768, Mozart, the twelve-year-old prodigy, was the pet of Viennese salons; Haydn, with thirty symphonies to his credit, was laying the musical foundations of a German Versailles at Esterhaz; Emanuel Bach, practically at the end of his career, had just left Frederick the Great to become Telemann's successor at Hamburg; and Stamitz, the great reformer of style and the real father of the modern orchestra, was already in his grave. On the other hand, there were still living men like Hasse and Porpora, whose recollection reached back to the very beginnings of the century. These men belonged to an earlier age, and so did in a sense all the men discussed in the last chapter, with a few obvious exceptions. But their influence extended far into the period which we are about to discuss; their careers are practically contemporaneous with the classic movement. The beginnings of that movement, the first impulses of the essentially new spirit we must seek in the work of men who were, like Pergolesi, the contemporaries of Bach and Handel.

To the reader of history perhaps the most significant outward sign of the impending change is the shifting of musical supremacy away from Italy, which had held unbroken sway since the days of Palestrina. We have seen in the last chapter how with Gluck the operatic centre of gravity was transferred from Naples to Paris. We shall now witness a similar change in the realm of 'absolute' music—this time in favor of Germany. The underlying causes of this change are fundamentally the same as those which directed the course of literature and general culture—namely the social and political upheaval that followed the Re-

POLITICAL AND LITERARY FORCES

formation and ushered in a century of struggle and strife, that kindled the Phœnix of a united and liberated nation, the Germany of to-day. A glance at the political history of the preceding era will help our comprehension of the period with which we have to deal.

The peace of Westphalia (1648) had left the German Empire a dismembered, powerless mass. No less than three hundred 'independent' states, ruled over by petty tyrants—princes, dukes, margraves, bishops—each of whom had the right to coin money, raise armies and contract alliances, made up a nation defenseless against foes, weakened by internal and military oppression, steeped in abject misery and moral depravity. For over a hundred years it remained an 'abortion,' an 'irregular body like unto a monster,' as Puffendorf characterized it. Despite its pretensions it was, as Voltaire said, 'neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire.' Flood after flood of pillaging soldiery had passed across its fertile acres, spreading ruin and dejection; the ravages of Louis XIV, the invasion of Kara Mustapha, the Spanish, the Swedish, the Polish wars, left the people victims of the selfish ambitions of brutish monarchs, men whose example set a premium upon crime. These noble robbers had made of the map of Europe a crazy-quilt, the only sizable patches of which represented France, Austria, and Russia. Italy, like Germany, was divided, but with this difference—its several portions were actually ruled by the 'powers'—Austria had Tuscany and Milan, Spain ruled Naples and Sicily, while France owned Sardinia and Savoy. Its superior culture, having thus the benefit of a benevolent paternalism, penetrated to the very hearts of the conquerors, to Vienna, Madrid, and Paris, and spread a thin but glittering coat all over Europe. Germany, on the other hand, was, under the sham of independence, so constantly threatened with annihilation, so impoverished through strife, that the very idea of culture sug-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

gested a foreign thing, an exotic within the reach only of the mighty. Friedrich von Logau in the early seventeenth century bewailed the influx of foreign fashions into Germany, while Moscherosch denounced the despisers and traitors of his fatherland; and Lessing, over a century later, was still attacking the predominance of French taste in literature. We must not wonder at this almost total eclipse of native culture. The fact that the racial genius could perpetuate its germ, even across this chasm of desolation, is one of the astounding evidences of its strength.

That germ, to which we owe the preservation of German culture, that thin current which ran all through the seventeenth and the early eighteenth century, had two distinct manifestations: the religious idealism of the north, and the optimistic rationalism of the south, which found expression in the writings of Leibnitz. The first of these movements produced in literature the religious lyrics of Protestant hymn writers, in music the cantatas, passions, and oratorios of a Bach and a Handel. Its ultimate expression was the *Messias* of Klopstock, which in a sense combined the two forms of art; for, as Dr. Kuno Francke * says, it is an 'oratorio' rather than an epic. As for Leibnitz, according to the same authority, 'it is hard to overestimate his services to modern culture. He stands midway between Luther and Goethe. . . . In a time of national degradation and misery his philosophy offered shelter to the higher thought and kept awake the hope of an ultimate resurrection of the German people.' The one event which signalizes that resurrection more than any is the battle of Rossbach in 1757. This was the shot that reverberated through Europe and summoned all eyes to witness a new spectacle, a prince who declared himself the servant of his people. With Frederick the Great as their hero the Germans of the North could rally to

* History of German Literature (1907).

POLITICAL AND LITERARY FORCES

the hope of a fatherland; their poets, tongue-tied for centuries, broke forth in new lyric bursts; the vision of a united, triumphant Germany fired patriots, philosophers, scientists and artists with enthusiasm for a new ideal. This idealism—or sentimentality—stood in sharp contrast to the somewhat cynical rationalism of Rousseau, Diderot, and d'Alembert, but it had an even stronger influence on art.

The immediate effect of this regeneration was an increased output of literature and of music, a greater individuality, or assertiveness, in the native styles, the perfection of its technique, and the crystallization of its forms. In literature it bore its first fruits in the works of Klopstock and Wieland. Already in 1748 Klopstock had 'sounded that morning call of joyous idealism which was the dominant note of the best in all modern German literature.' This poet is an important figure to us, for he is of all writers the most admired in the period of musical history with which these chapters deal. His very name brought tears to the eyes of Charlotte in Goethe's *Werther*; Leopold Mozart could go no further in his admiration of his son's genius than to compare him to Klopstock. Wieland, who lived less in the realm of the spiritual but was fired with a greater enthusiasm for humanity, was among the first to give expression to his hope of a united Germany. He was personally acquainted with Mozart and early appreciated his genius.*

A transformation was thus wrought in the minds of the people of northern Europe. Much as in the hu-

* 'The Emperor Joseph, who objected to Haydn's "tricks and nonsense," requested Dittersdorf in 1786 to draw a parallel between Haydn's and Mozart's chamber music. Dittersdorf answered by requesting the Emperor in his turn to draw a parallel between Klopstock and Gellert; whereupon Joseph replied that both were great poets, but that Klopstock must be read repeatedly in order to understand his beauties, whereas Gellert's beauties lay plainly exposed to the first glance. Dittersdorf's analogy of Mozart with Klopstock, Haydn with Gellert (!), was readily accepted by the Emperor.' Cf. Otto Jahn: 'Life of Mozart,' Vol. III.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

manitarian revelation of the Italian Renaissance, men became introspective, discovered in the recesses of their souls a new sympathy; men's hearts became more receptive than they had ever been; and, as, after the strife of centuries, Europe settled down to a placid period of reconstruction, all this found manifold expression in people's lives and in their art.

The close of the Seven Years' War in 1763 had brought an era of comparative peace. Austria, though deprived of some territory, entered upon a period of prosperity which augured well for the progress of art; Prussia, on the other hand, proceeded upon a career of unprecedented expansion under the enlightened leadership of the great Frederick. The Viennese court, which had patronized music for generations, now became what Burney called it, 'the musical capital of Europe,' while Berlin and Potsdam constituted a new centre for the cultivation of the art. Frederick, the friend of Voltaire, though himself a lover of French culture, and preferring the French language to his own, nevertheless encouraged the advancement of things native. He insisted that his subjects patronize home manufactures, affect native customs, and, contrary to Joseph II in Vienna, he engaged German musicians for his court in preference to Italians. The two courts may thus be conceived as the strongholds of the two opposing styles, German and Italian, which in fusing produced the new expressive style that is the most characteristic element of classic music.

II

To make clear this conflict of styles represented by the north and the south, by Berlin and Vienna, respectively, we need only ask the reader to recall what we have said about the music of Bach in Vol. I and that

THE CONFLICT OF STYLES

of Pergolesi in the last chapter. In the one we saw the culmination of polyphonic technique upon a modern harmonic basis, a fusion of the old polyphonic and new monodic styles, enriched by infinite harmonic variety, with a wealth of ingenious modulations and chromatic alterations, and a depth of spirit analogous to the religious idealism which we have cited as the dominant intellectual note of post-Reformation Germany. In the other, the direct outcome of the monodic idea, and therefore essentially melodic, we found a consummate grace and lightness, but also a certain shallowness, a desire to please, to tickle the ear rather than to stir the deeper emotions. In the course of time this style came to be absolutely dominated by harmony, through the peculiar agency of the Figured Bass. But instead of an ever-shifting harmonic foundation, an iridescent variety of color, we have here an essentially simple harmonic structure, largely diatonic, and centring closely around the tonic and dominant as the essential points of gravity, swinging the direction of its cadences back and forth between the two, while employing every melodic device to introduce all the variety possible within the limitations of so simple a scheme.

While, then, the style of Bach, and the North Germans, on the one hand, had a predominant *unity of spirit* it tended to *variety of expression*; the style of the Italians, on the other hand, brought a *variety of ideas* with a comparative simplicity of scheme or *monotony of expression*, which quickly crystallized into stereotyped forms. One of these forms, founded upon the simple harmonic scheme of tonic and dominant, developed, as we have seen, into the instrumental sonata, a type of which the violin sonatas of Corelli and his successors, Francesco Geminiani, Pietro Locatelli, and Giuseppi Tartini, and the piano sonatas of Domenico Scarlatti are excellent examples. Many Italians

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

managed to endow such pieces with a breadth, a song-like sweep of melody, to which their inimitable facility of vocal writing led them quite naturally. Pergolesi especially, as we have said, deserves special merit for the introduction of the so-called 'singing allegro' in the first movements of his sonatas. Germans were quick to follow these examples and their innate tendency to variety of expression caused them to add another element—that of rhythmic contrast.* Indeed, although the Italian style continued to hold sway throughout Europe long after 1700, we find among its exponents an ever greater number of Germans. Their proclivity for harmonic fullness, pathos, and dignity was, moreover, reinforced by the influence of French orchestral music of the style of Lully and his successors. It was reserved for the Germans, also, to develop the sonata form as we know it to-day, to build it up into that wonderful vehicle for free fancy and for the philosophic development of musical ideas.

Before introducing the reader to the men of this epoch, who prepared the way for Haydn and Mozart, we are obliged, for a better understanding of their work, to describe briefly the nature and development of that form which serves, so to speak, as a background to their activity.

Certain successive epochs in the history of our art have been so dominated by one or another type of music that they might as aptly derive their names from the particular type in fashion as the early Christian era did from plain-chant. Thus the sixteenth century might well be called the age of the madrigal, the early seventeenth the period of accompanied monody, and the late seventeenth the epoch of the suite. As the vogue of any of these forms increases, a chain of con-

* Johann Friedrich Fasch (1688-1758) was, according to Riemann, the first to introduce this contrast. He was one of the most interesting of the minor composers of Bach's time. Cf. Riemann's *Collegium Musicum*, No. 10.

THE SONATA FORM

ventions and rules invariably grows up which tends first to fix it, then to force it into stereotypes which become the instrument of mediocre pedants. The very rules by which it grows to perfection become the shackles which arrest its expansion. Thus it usually deteriorates almost immediately after it has reached its highest elevation at the hand of genius, unless it gives way to the broadening, liberalizing assaults of iconoclasts, and only in the measure to which it is capable of adapting itself to broader principles is further life vouchsafed to it. It continues then to exist beyond the period which is, so to speak, its own, in a sort of afterglow of glory, less brilliant but infinitely richer in interest, color and all-pervading warmth. All the types above mentioned, from the madrigal down, have continued to exist, in a sense, to our time, and, though our age is obviously as antagonistic to the spirit of the madrigal as it is to that of plain-chant, we might cite modern part-songs partaking of the same spirit which have a far stronger appeal. The modern symphonic suites of a Bizet or a Rimsky-Korsakoff as compared to the orchestral suite of the eighteenth century furnish perhaps the most striking case in point.

The period which this and the following chapters attempt to describe is dominated by the sonata form. Not a composer of instrumental music—and it was essentially the age of instrumental music—but essayed that form in various guises. Even the writers of opera did not fail to adopt it in their instrumental sections, and even in their arias. But the decades which are our immediate concern represent a formative stage, because there is much variety, much uncertainty, both in nomenclature and in the matter itself. Nomenclature is never highly specialized at first. A name primarily denotes a variety of things which have perhaps only slight marks of resemblance. Thus we have seen how *sonata*, derived from the verb *suonare*, to sound,

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

is at first a name for any instrumental piece, in distinction to *cantata*, a vocal piece. The *canzona da sonar* (or *canzon sonata*) symbolized the application of the vocal style to instruments, and the abbreviation 'sonata' was for a time almost synonymous with *sinfonia*, as in the first solo sonatas (for violin) of Bagio Marini about 1617. The sonata in its modern sense is essentially a solo form; but, during a century or more of its evolution, the most familiar guise under which it appeared was the 'trio-sonata.' That, as we have seen, broadened out to symphonic proportions (while adapting some of the features of the orchestral suite) and the sonata became more specifically a solo piece, or, better, a group of pieces, for the sonata of our day is a 'cyclical' piece. But through all its outward manifestations, and irrespective of them, it underwent a definite and continuous metamorphosis, by which it assumed a more and more definite pattern, or patterns, which eventually fused into one.

The 'cycle sonata' undoubtedly had its root idea in the dance suite, and for a long time that derivation was quite evident. The minuet, obstinately holding its place in the scheme until Beethoven converted it into the scherzo, was the last birthmark to disappear. The variety of rhythm that the dance suite offers is also clearly preserved in the principle of rhythmic contrasts *between the movements*. These comprise usually a rapid opening movement embodying the essentials of the 'sonata form'; a contrasting slow movement, shorter and in less conventional form—sometimes aria, sometimes 'theme and variations'—stands next; the finale, in the lighter Italian form, was usually a quick dance movement or short, brilliant piece of slight significance; in the German and more developed examples it was often a rondo (one principal theme recurring at intervals throughout the piece with fresh 'episodical' matter interspersed), and more and more frequently

THE SONATA FORM

it was cast in the first-movement form. Between the slow movement and the finale is the place for the minuet (if the sonata is in four movements). Haydn, though not the first so to use it, quickened its tempo and enriched it in content. A second minuet (Menuetto II) appears in the earlier symphonies of Haydn and Mozart, which by and by is incorporated with the first as 'trio'—the familiar alternate section always followed by a repeat of the minuet itself.

Of course, the distinguishing feature of the sonata over all other forms is the peculiar pattern of at least *one* of its movements—most usually the first—the outcome of a long evolution, which, in its finally settled form, with the later Mozart and with Beethoven, became the most efficient, the most flexible, and the most convincing medium for the elaboration of musical ideas. The 'first-movement form,' as it has been called, appears in the eighteenth century in either of two primary patterns: the *binary* (consisting of two sections), and the *ternary* (consisting of three). The binary, gradually introduced by the Italians, notably Pergolesi and Alberti, is simply a broadening of the 'song-form' in two sections (each of which is repeated), having one single theme or subject, presented in the following key arrangement ('A' denoting the tonic or 'home' key and 'B' the dominant or related key): |:A—B:| |:B—A:|. This, with broadened dimensions and more definite thematic distinction, within each section gave way to: |:A¹—B²:||:B¹—A²:| (¹ and ² representing first and second theme, respectively). In this arrangement the second section simply reproduces the thematic material of the first, but in the reverse order of keys or tonality. It should be added that the 'second theme' was usually, at this early stage of development, a mere suggestion, an embryo with very slight individuality. The leading representatives of this type of form as applied to the suite as well as the sonata were

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

Pergolesi, Domenico Alberti, Handel, J. S. Bach, J. F. Fasch, Domenico Scarlatti, Locatelli, and Gluck, and most of the later Italians, who continued to prefer this easily comprehended form, placing but simple problems of musicianship before the composer. It was eminently suited to the easy grace of polite music, of the 'salon' music of the eighteenth century.

But in the works of German suite writers especially the restatement of the first theme after the double bar displays almost from the beginning a tendency toward variety, abridgment, expansion, and modulation of harmony. Gradually this section assumed such a bewildering, fanciful character, such a variety of modulations, that the subject in its original form was forgotten by the hearer, and all recollection of the original key had been obliterated from the mind. Composers then grasped the device of restating the first theme in the original key after this free development of it, and then restating the second theme as before. Both the tonic and the dominant elements of the first section (or exposition) are now seen to be repeated in the tonic key in the restatement section (or recapitulation) and the form has assumed the following shape:

$$||:A^1-B^2:||:(A^2)|\overset{\text{Development or}}{\underset{\text{'Working-out'}}{}}|A^1-B^1:|$$

This is clearly a three-division form, and as such is closely allied to the ballad form, or *ternary* song-form, which is as old as the binary. Already Johann Sebastian Bach in his Prelude in F minor, in the second part of the 'Well-tempered Clavichord,' gives an example of it, and in Emanuel Bach and his German contemporaries this type becomes the standard. But it is curious to observe how strongly the Italian influence worked upon composers of the time, for, whenever the desire to please is evident in their work, we see them adopt the simpler pattern, and even when the ternary form is used the so-called 'working-out' is little more than an

THE BERLIN SCHOOL

aimless sequence of meaningless passage work intended to dazzle by its brilliance and its grandiose effects, with but little relation to the subject matter of the piece. Even Mozart and Haydn veered back and forth between the two types until they had arrived at a considerably advanced state of maturity.

The second theme, as time went on, became more and more individualized and, as it assumed more distinct rhythmic and melodic characteristics, it lent itself more freely to logical development, like the principal subjects, became in fact a real 'subject' on a par with the first. With Stamitz and the Mannheim school, at last, we meet the idea of *contrast between the two themes*, not only in key but in spirit, in meaning. As with characters in a story, these differences can readily be taken hold of and elaborated. The themes may be played off against each other, they may be understood as masculine and feminine, as bold and timid, or as light and tragic—the possibilities of the scheme are unlimited, the complications under which an ingenious mind can conceive it are infinite in their interest. Thus only, by means of *contrast*, could states of mind be translated into musical language, thus only was it possible to give voice to the deeper sentiments, the new feelings that were tugging at the heart-strings of Europe. Only with this great principle of emotional contrast did the art become receptive to the stirrings of *Sturm und Drang*, of incipient Romanticism, thus only could it give expression to the graceful melancholy of a Mozart, the majestic ravings of a Beethoven.

III

Having given an indication of the various stages through which the sonata form passed, we may now speak of the men who developed it. We are here, of

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

course, concerned only with those who cultivated the later and eventually universal German type.

In the band of musicians gathered about the court of Frederick the Great we find such pioneers as Joachim Quantz, the king's instructor on the flute; * Gottlieb Graun, whose significance as a composer of symphonies, overtures, concertos, and sonatas is far greater than that of his brother Karl Heinrich, the composer of *Der Tod Jesu*; and the violinist Franz Benda, who was, however, surpassed in musicianship by his brother Georg, *kapellmeister* in Gotha. All of these and a number of others constitute the so-called Berlin school, whose most distinguished representative by far was Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, the most eminent of Johann Sebastian's sons. He has been called, not without reason, the father of the piano sonata, for, although Kuhnau preceded him in applying the form to the instrument, it is he who made it popular, and who definitely fixed its pattern, determined the order of its movements—Allegro; Andante or Adagio; Allegro or Presto—so familiar to all music-lovers.

Emanuel Bach was born in Weimar in 1714. He was sent to Frankfort to study law, but instead established a chorus with himself as its leader. In 1738 he went to Berlin, where, two years later, we see him playing the accompaniments to 'Old Fritz's' flute solos. The royal amateur's accomplishments were of doubtful merit, but Bach stood the strain for twenty-seven years, at the end of which the king abandoned the flute for the sword, and Bach abandoned the king to finish his days in Hamburg as director of church music. But church music was not his *métier*. His cantatas were 'pot-boilers.' Emanuel was made of different stuff from his father. He fitted into his time—a polished

* His compositions were chiefly for that instrument, and he achieved lasting merit with his *Anweisung die Flöte traversière zu spielen* (1752). He was born in 1697 and died in 1773.

THE SONS OF BACH

courtier, more witty than pious, more suave than sincere, more brilliant than deep, but of solid musicianship none the less—the technician *par excellence*, both as composer and executant, a clean-cut formalist, a thorough harmonist ‘crammed full of racy novelty,’ though not free from pedantry, and preferring always the *galant* style of the period. The ‘polite’ instrument, the harpsichord, was essentially his. The ‘Essay on the True Manner of Playing the Clavier,’ which he wrote in Berlin, is still of value to-day. His technique was, no doubt, derived from that of his father, but he introduced a still more advanced method of fingering.

His great importance to history, however, lies in his instrumental compositions, comprising no less than two hundred and ten solo pieces—piano sonatas, rondos, concertos, trio-sonatas of the conventional type (two violins and bass), six string quartets and the symphonies printed in 1780. These works exercised a dual force. While yielding to the taste of the time, they held the balance to the side of greater harmonic richness and artistic propriety; on the other hand, they played an important part in the further development of the prevailing forms to a point where they could become ‘free enough and practical enough to deal with the deep emotions.’ ‘As yet people looked on the art as a refined sort of amusement. Not until Beethoven had written his music did its possibilities as a vehicle for deep human feeling and experience become evident.’ * By following fashion Bach became its leader, and so exercised a widespread influence over his contemporaries and immediate followers. For a few years, says Mr. W. H. Hadow, the fate of music depended upon Emanuel Bach; Mozart himself, though directly influenced by him only in later life, called him ‘the father of us all.’

Bach may hardly be said to have originated the mod-

* Surette and Mason: ‘The Appreciation of Music.’

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

ern 'pianistic' style—the free, brilliant manner of writing particularly adapted to the requirements of the instrument. Couperin and the astonishing Domenico Scarlatti were before him. Naturally the instrument which he used was not nearly so resonant or sonorous as the piano of our day; an instrument the strings of which were plucked by quills attached to the key lever, not hit by hammers as the strings of our piano, was, of course, devoid of all sustaining power. This fact accounts for the infinite number of ornaments, trills, mordents, grace notes, bewildering in their variety, with which Bach's sonatas are replete. Despite the technical reason for their existence we cannot forego the obvious analogy between them and the rococo style prevalent in the architecture and decorations of the period. Emanuel Bach's music was as fashionable as that style, and his popularity outlasted it. Strange as it may seem, 'Bach,' in the eighteenth century and beyond, always meant 'Emanuel!'

Quite a different sort of man was Emanuel's elder brother, Wilhelm Friedemann Bach, the favorite son of his father and thought to be the most gifted, too. But the definition of genius as 'an infinite capacity for taking pains' would not fit his gifts. Wilhelm preferred a good time to concentrated labor, hence his name is not writ large in history. Yet his work, mostly preserved only in manuscript—concertos, suites, sonatas and fantasias—shows more real individuality, more *Innigkeit* and, at times, real passion than does his brother's. And, moreover, something that could never happen to his brother's works happened to one of his. It was ascribed to his father and was so published in the Bach Society's edition of Sebastian's works. In the examples of his work, resurrected by the indefatigable Dr. Riemann, we are often surprised by harmonic vagaries and rhythmic ingenuities that recall strongly the older Bach; the impassioned fancy of that

THE SONS OF BACH

polyphonic giant finds often a faint echo in the rhapsodic wanderings of his eldest son.

Friedemann Bach's life was, like his work, rambling, irregular. Born in 1710, he was organist in Dresden from 1733 to 1747; then at Halle, in the church that was Handel's drilling ground under old Zachau. His extravagances cost him this post and perhaps many another, for he roved restlessly over Germany for the rest of his life until, a broken-down genius of seventy-four, he ended his career in Berlin in 1784.

In sharp contrast to the career of the oldest son of Bach stands that of the youngest, Johann Christian (born 1734, in Leipzig), chiefly renowned as an opera composer of the Italian school. He has been called the 'Milanese Bach,' because from 1754 to 1762 he made that Italian city his home and there wrote operas, and became a Catholic to qualify as the organist of Milan Cathedral; and the 'London Bach' because there he spent the remaining twenty years of his life, a most useful and honorable career. His first London venture was in opera, too, but his historic importance does not lie in that field. Symphonies (including one for two orchestras), concertos for piano and various other instruments, quintets, quartets, trios, sonatas for violin, and numerous piano pieces which did much to popularize the new instrument, are his real monuments. Trained at first by his brother Emanuel, he was bound to follow the polite, elegant style of the period, and more so perhaps because of his Italian experience. For that reason his value has been greatly underestimated. But he is, nevertheless, an important factor in the stylistic reform that prepared the way for the great classics, and the upbuilding of German instrumental music. Of his influence upon Mozart and Haydn we shall have more to say anon. That influence was, of course, largely Italian, for Bach followed the Italian pattern in his sonatas. It was he that passed on to

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

Mozart the *singing allegro* which he had brought with him from Italy, and so he may be considered in a measure the communicator of Pergolesi's genius.

As the centre of London musical life Christian Bach exercised a tremendous influence in the formation of popular taste.* The subscription concerts which he and another German, Carl Friedrich Abel (1725-1787), instituted in 1764, were to London what the *Concerts spirituels* were to Paris. Not only symphonies, but cantatas and chamber works of every description were here performed in the manner of our public concerts of to-day, and the higher forms of music were thus placed for the first time within the reach of a great number of people. After 1775 these concerts took place in the famous Hanover Square Rooms and were continued until 1782. In the following year another series, known as the 'Professional Concerts,' was begun and since that time the English capital has had an unbroken succession of symphonic concerts.

IV

The writer of musical history is confronted at every point with the problem of classification. The men whom we have discussed can, though united by ties of nationality and even family, hardly be considered as of one school. We have taken them as the representatives of the North German musical art; yet, as we were obliged to state, Southern influence affected nearly all of them. Similarly, we should find in analyzing the music of the Viennese that a more or less rugged Germanism had entered into it. J. J. Fux (1660-1741), the pioneer of the 'Viennese school'; Georg Reutter, father and son (1656-1738, and 1708-1772); F. L. Gassmann

* He was music master to the queen and in a way entered upon the heritage of Handel.

THE MANNHEIM REFORM

(1723-1774); Johann Georg Albrechtsberger (1736-1809); Leopold Hoffman (1730-1772); Georg Christoph Wagenseil (1715-1777); and Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf (1739-1799), who, with others, are usually reckoned as of that school, are all examples of this Germanism. Indeed, these men assume a historic importance only in the degree to which they absorb the advancing reforms of their northern *confrères*. All of them are indebted for what merit they possess to the great school of stylistic reformers who, about the year 1750, gathered in the beautiful Rhenish city of Mannheim, and whose leader, Johann Stamitz, was, until recently, unknown to historians except as an executive musician. His reappearance has cleared up many an unexplained phenomenon, and for the first time has placed the entire question of the origins of the Classic, or Viennese, style, the style of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, in its proper light. Much of the merit ascribed to Emanuel Bach, for instance, in connection with the sonata, and to Haydn in connection with the symphony belongs rightfully to Stamitz. We may now safely consider the Viennese school, like that of Paris, as an offshoot of the Mannheim school and shall, therefore, discuss both as subsidiary to it.

The Mannheim reform brought into instrumental music, as we have said, one essentially new idea—the idea of contrast. Contrast is one of the two fundamental principles of musical form; the other is reiteration. Reiteration in its various forms—imitation, transposition, and repetition—is a familiar element in every musical composition. The ‘germination’ of musical ideas, the logical development of such ideas, or motives—into phrases, sentences, sections, and movements, is in practice only a broadening of that principle. All the forms which we have discussed—the aria, the canzona, the toccata, the fugue, and the sonata—owe their being to various methods of applying it. Con-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

trast, the other leading element of form, may be applied technically in several different ways, of which only two interest us here—contrast of *key* and dynamic contrast. Contrast of key is the chief requisite in the most highly organized forms, such as the fugue and the sonata, and as such had been consciously employed for practically two hundred years. But dynamic contrast—the change from loud to soft, and *vice versa*, especially gradual change, which, moreover, carries with it the broader idea of varying expression, contrast of *mood* and *spirit*, never entered into instrumental music until the advent of Johann Stamitz. It is this duality of expression that distinguishes the new from the old; this is the outstanding feature of Classic music over all that preceded it.

Johann Stamitz was born in Deutsch-Brod, Bohemia, in 1717, and died at Mannheim in 1757. In the course of his forty years he revolutionized instrumental practice and laid the foundations of modern orchestral technique, created a new style of composition, which enabled Mozart and Beethoven to give adequate expression to their genius; and originated a method of writing which resulted in the abolition of the Figured Bass. When, in 1742, Charles VII had himself crowned emperor in Frankfort, Stamitz first aroused the attention of the assembled nobility as a violin virtuoso. The Prince Elector of the Palatinate, Karl Theodor, at once engaged him as court musician. In 1745 he made him his concert master and musical director. Within a year or two, Stamitz made the court band into the best orchestra of Europe. Burney, Leopold Mozart, and others who have left their judgment of it convince us that it was as good as an orchestra could be with the limitations imposed by the still imperfect intonation of certain instruments. It was, at any rate, the first orchestra on a modern footing, whose members were artists, bent upon artistic interpretation. It is curious

GENESIS OF THE SYMPHONY

to read Leopold Mozart's expression of surprise at finding them 'honest, decent people, not given to drink, gambling, and roistering,' but such was the reputation musicians as a class enjoyed in those days.*

We may recall how Jommelli introduced the 'orchestral crescendo' in the Strassburg opera. That he emulated the Mannheim orchestra rather than set an example for it seems unquestionable; for Stamitz had already been at his work ten years when Jommelli arrived. The gradual change from *piano* to *forte*, and the sudden change in either direction to indicate a change of mood, not only within single movements, but *within phrases and even themes*, was bound to lead to important consequences. While fiercely opposed by the pedants among German musicians, the practice found quick acceptance in the large centres where Stamitz's famous Opus 1 was performed. These Six Sonatas (or Symphonies), '*ou à trois ou avec toutes (sic) l'orchestre*,' were brought out in 1751 at the *Concerts spirituels* under Le Gros.† Stamitz's 'Sonatas' were performed with drums, trumpets, and horns. Another symphony with horns and oboes, and another with horns and clarinets (a rare novelty), were brought out in the winter of 1754-55, with Stamitz himself as conductor. These 'symphonies' were, as a matter of fact, trio-sonatas in the conventional form—two violins and Figured Bass—such as had been produced in great

* For further details concerning the Mannheim orchestra we refer the reader to Vol. VIII, Chap. II.

† The *Concerts spirituels*, founded in 1725 by Philidor, were so called because they were held on church holidays, when theatres were closed. Mouret, Thuret, Royer, Mendonville, d'Auvergne, Gaviniès, and Le Gros succeeded Philidor in conducting them till the revolution in 1791 brought them to an end. Another series of concerts, though private, is important for us here, because of its early acceptance of Mannheim principles. This was inaugurated by a wealthy land owner, La Pouplinière, who had been an enthusiastic protector of Rameau. 'It was he,' said Gossec, 'who first introduced the use of horns at his concerts, *following the counsel of the celebrated Johann Stamitz*.' This was about 1748, and in 1754 Stamitz himself visited the orchestra, after which Gossec became its conductor and developed the new style.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

number since the time of Pergolesi. But there was a difference. The Figured Bass was a fully participating third part, not depending upon the usual harpsichord interpretation of the harmony. The compositions were, in fact, true string trios. But they were written for (optional) orchestral execution, and when so performed the added wind instruments supplied the harmonic 'filling.' This means, then, the application of the classic sonata form to orchestral music, and virtually the creation of the symphony.*

While not, by a long way, parallel with the symphonies of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, these works of Stamitz are, nevertheless, true symphonies in a classic style, orchestral compositions in sonata form. They have the essential first-movement construction, they are free from the fugato style of the earlier orchestral pieces, and, instead of the indefinite rambling of passage work, they present the clear thematic phraseology, the germination of ideas, characteristic of the form. Their sincere phraseology, says Riemann, 'their boldness of conception, and the masterly thematic development which became an example in the period that followed . . . give Stamitz's works lasting value. Haydn and Mozart rest absolutely upon his shoulders.' †

Following Stamitz's first efforts there appeared in print a veritable flood of similar works, known in

* Riemann cites Scheibe in the *Kritische Musikus* to the effect that symphonies with drums and trumpets (or horns) were already common in 1754, but we may safely assume that they were not symphonies in our sense—orchestral sonatas—for it must be recalled that the word *Sinfonia* was applied to pieces of various kinds, from a note-against-note canzona (seventeenth century) to interludes in operas, oratorios, etc., and more especially to the Italian operatic overture as distinguished from the French. The German dance-suite, too, from 1650 on, had a first movement called *Sinfonia*, which was superseded by the overture (in the French style) soon after. In the early eighteenth century the prevailing orchestral piece was an *overture*, usually modelled after the Italian *Sinfonia*. Not this, indeed, but the chamber-sonata was the real forerunner of the symphony, as our text has just shown.

† *Handbuch der Musikgeschichte*, II². We are indebted to Riemann for this entire question of Stamitz, whose findings are the result of very recent researches.

FOLLOWERS OF THE MANNHEIM SCHOOL

France as *Simphonies d'Allemagne*, most of them by direct pupils of Stamitz, by F. X. Richter, his associate in Mannheim, by Wagenseil, Toeschi, Holtzbauer, Filtz, and Cannabich, his successor at the Mannheim *Pult*. Stamitz's own work comprises ten orchestral trios, fifty symphonies, violin concertos, violin solo and violin-piano sonatas, a fair amount for so short a career. That for a long time this highly interesting figure disappeared from the annals of musical history is only less remarkable than the eclipse of Bach's fame for seventy-five years after his death, though in Stamitz's case it was hardly because of slow recognition, for already Burney had characterized him as a great genius. Arteaga in 1785 called him 'the Rubens among composers' and Gerbert (1792) said that 'his divine talent placed him far above his contemporaries.'

V

From these contemporaries we shall select only a few as essential links in the chain of development. Three men stand out as intermediaries between Stamitz and the Haydn-Mozart epoch: Johann Schobert, chiefly in the field of piano music; Luigi Boccherini, especially for stringed chamber-music; and Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf, for the symphony. These signalize the 'cosmopolization' of the new art; representing, as it were, its French, Italian, and South German outposts.

Schobert is especially important because of the influence which he and his colleague Eckard exercised upon Mozart at a very early age.* These two men were the two favorite pianists of Paris *salons* about the mid-

* The first four piano concertos ascribed to Mozart in Koechel's catalogue have now been proved to be merely studies based on Schobert's sonatas. Cf. T. de Wyzewa et G. de St. Foix: *Un maître inconnu de Mozart*.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

dle of the century. Chamber music with piano obbligato found in Schobert one of its first exponents. A composer of agreeable originality, solid in musicianship, and an unequivocal follower of the Mannheim school, he must be reckoned as a valiant supporter of the German sonata as opposed to its lighter Italian sister, though French characteristics are not by any means lacking in his work.

As one in whom these characteristics predominate we should mention François Joseph Gossec, familiar to us as the writer of *opéras comiques*, but also important as a composer of trio-sonatas (of the usual kind), some for orchestral performance (like those of Stamitz, *ad lib.*), and several real symphonies, all of which are clearly influenced in manner by Stamitz and the Mannheimers. Gossec was, in a way, the centre of Paris musical life, for he conducted successively the private concerts given under the patronage of La Pouplinière, those of Prince Conti in Chantilly, the *Concert des amateurs*, which he founded in 1770, and, eventually, the *Concerts spirituels*, reorganized by him. The *Mercur de France*, in an article on Rameau's *Castor et Pollux*, calls Gossec France's representative musician among the pioneers of the new style. Contrasting his work with Rameau's the critic refers to the latter as being *d'une teneur* (of one tenor), while Gossec's is full of *nuance* and contrast. This slight digression will dispose of the 'Paris school' for the present; we shall now proceed to the chief *Italian* representative of Mannheim principles.

In placing Boccherini before Haydn in our account of the string quartet we may lay ourselves open to criticism, for Haydn is universally considered the originator of that form. But, as in almost every case, the fixing of a new form cannot be ascribed to the efforts of a single man. Although Haydn's priority seems established, Boccherini may more aptly be taken as the start-

RISE OF THE STRING QUARTET

ing point, for, while Haydn represents a more advanced state of development, Boccherini at the outset displays a far more finished routine.

In principle, the string quartet has existed since the sixteenth century, when madrigals * and *frottole* written in vocal polyphony and for vocal execution were adapted to instruments. The greater part of the polyphonic works of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was written in four parts, and so were the German *lieder*, French *chansons*, and Italian *canzonette*, as well as the dance pieces of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In instrumental music four-part writing has never been superseded, despite the quondam preference for many voices, and the one hundred and fifty years' reign of Figured Bass. But a strictly four-part execution was adhered to less and less, as orchestral scoring came more and more into vogue for suite and sonata. Hence the string quartet, when it reappeared, was as much of a novelty in its way as the accompanied solo song seemed to be in 1600. *Quartetti*, *sonate a quattro* and *sinfonie a quattro* are, indeed, common titles in the early seventeenth century, but their character is distinctly different from our chamber music; they are *orchestral*, depending on harmonic thickening and massed chordal effects, while the peculiar charm of the string quartet depends on purity and integrity of line in every part, and while, at the same time, each part is at all times necessary to the harmonic texture. Thus the string quartet represents a more perfect fusion of the polyphonic and harmonic ideals than any other type. The exact point of division between 'orchestral' and true quartets cannot, of course, be determined, though the distinction becomes evident in works of Stamitz and Gossec, when, in one opus, we find trios or quartets, some of which are expressly determined for orchestral treatment while others are not.

* The majority of madrigals were, however, written in five parts.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

It is Stamitz's reform again which 'loosened the tongue of subjective expression,' and, by turning away from fugal treatment, prepared the way for the true string quartet. Boccherini's first quartets are still in reality symphonies; and in Haydn's early works, too, the distinction between the two is not clear. Boccherini's, however, are so surprisingly full of new forms of figuration, so sophisticated in dynamic nuances, and so strikingly modern in style that, without the previous appearance of Stamitz, Boccherini would have to be considered a true pioneer.

Luigi Boccherini was born in 1743 in Lucca. After appearing in Paris as 'cellist he was made court virtuoso to Luiz, infanta of Spain, and accordingly he settled in Madrid. Frederick William II of Prussia acknowledged the dedication of a work by conferring the title of court composer on Boccherini, who then continued to write much for the king and was rewarded generously, like Haydn and Mozart after him. The death of his royal patron in 1797 and the loss of his Spanish post reduced the composer to poverty at an old age (he died 1805). He has to his credit no less than 91 string quartets, 125 string quintets, 54 string trios and a host of other works, including twenty symphonies, also cantatas and oratorios. To-day he is neglected, perhaps unjustly, but in this he shares the fate of all the musicians of his period who abandoned themselves to the lighter, more elegant *genre* of composition.

The relation of Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf to the Mannheim school is, in the symphonic field, relatively the same as that of Schobert in regard to the piano, and Boccherini in connection with the string quartet. Again we must guard against the criticism of detracting from the glory of Haydn. Both Haydn and Dittersdorf were pioneers in developing the symphony according to the Mannheim principles, but, of course, Haydn in his later works represents a more advanced stage, and will,

VIENNA

therefore, more properly receive full treatment in the next chapter. Ditters probably composed his first orchestral works between 1761 and 1765, while kapellmeister to the bishop of Grosswardein in Hungary, where he succeeded Michael Haydn (of whom presently). Though Joseph Haydn's first symphony (in D-major) had already appeared in 1759, it had as yet none of the earmarks of the new style.

Ditters was doubtless more broadly educated than most musicians of his time,* and probably in touch with the latest developments, a fact borne out by his works, which, however, show no material advance over his models.

These works include, notably, twelve orchestral symphonies on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, besides about one hundred others and innumerable pieces of chamber music, many of the lighter social *genre*, and several oratorios, masses, and cantatas. His comic operas have a special significance and will be mentioned in another connection. Ditters was more fortunate in honors than material gain. Both the order of the Golden Spur, which seems to have been a coveted badge of greatness, and the patent of nobility came to him; but after the death of his last patron, the prince bishop of Breslau, he was forced to seek the shelter of a friendly roof, the country estate of Ignaz von Stillfried in Bohemia, where he died in 1799.

His Vienna colleague, Georg Christian Wagenseil,† we may dismiss with a few words, for, though one of the most fashionable composers of his time, his compositions have hardly any historic interest—they lack real individuality. But he was in the line of development under the Mannheim influence, and he did for

* This education he owed to the magnanimity of Prince Joseph of Hildburghausen, whom in his youth he attended as page. In 1761 the prince secured him a place in the Vienna court orchestra which he held till his engagement in Grosswardein.

† Born, Vienna, 1715; died there 1777.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

the piano concerto what Schobert did for the sonata—applied to it the newly crystallized sonata form. His concertos were much in vogue; little Mozart had them in his prodigy's répertoire—and no doubt they left at least a trace of their influence on his wonderfully absorbent mind. Wagenseil enjoyed a favored existence at court as teacher of the Empress Maria Theresa and the imperial princesses, with the rank of imperial court composer. The Latin titles on his publications seem to reflect his somewhat pompous personality. Pieces in various forms for keyboard predominate, but the usual quota of string music, church music, and some symphonies are in evidence. His sixteen operas are a mere trifle in comparison with the productivity of the period.

* * *

Before closing our review of the minor men of the period which had its climax in the practically simultaneous appearance of Haydn and Mozart, we must take at least passing notice of two men, the brother of one and the father of the other, who, by virtue of this close connection, could not fail to exercise a very direct influence upon their greater relatives. By a peculiar coincidence these two had one identical scene of action—the archiepiscopal court of Salzburg, that Alpine fastness hemmed in by the mountains of Tyrol, Styria, and Bohemia. Hither Leopold Mozart had come from Augsburg, where he was born in 1719, to study law at the university; but he soon entered the employ of the Count of Thurn, canon of the cathedral, as secretary, and subsequently that of the prince archbishop as court musician, and here he ended his days at the same court but under another master of a far different sort. Johann Michael Haydn became his confrère, or rather his superior, in 1762, having secured the place of archiepiscopal *kapellmeister*, left vacant

SALZBURG

by the death of the venerable Eberlin. Before this he had held a similar but less important post at Grosswardein (Hungary) as predecessor to Ditters, and, like his slightly older brother Joseph, had begun his career as chorister in St. Stephen's in Vienna.

Salzburg had always been one of the foremost cities of Europe in its patronage of musical art. Not only the reigning prelates, but people of every station cultivated it. At this time it held many musicians of talent; and its court concerts as well as the elaborate musical services at the cathedral and the abbey of St. Peter's, the oratorios and the occasional performances under university auspices contributed to the creation of a real musical atmosphere. The old Archbishop Sigismund, whose death came only too soon, must, in spite of the elder Mozart's misgivings on the subject, have been a liberal, appreciative patron, for the interminable leaves of absence, for artistic and commercial purposes, required by both father and son were sufficient to try the patience of anyone less understanding. Leopold's chief merit to the world was the education of his son, for the sake of which he is said to have sacrificed all other opportunities as pedagogue. His talents in that direction were considerable, as his pioneer 'Violin method' (1756) attests. It experienced several editions, also in translations, some even posthumous. His compositions, through the agency of which his great son first received the influence of Mannheim, were copious but of mediocre value. Nevertheless, their formal correctness and sound musicianship were most salutary examples for the emulation of young Wolfgang. Leopold had the good sense to abandon composition as soon as he became aware of his son's genius and to bend every effort to its development. The elder Mozart received the title of court composer and the post of *vice-kapellmeister* under Michael Haydn, when the latter came to Salzburg.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

Michael Haydn's career in Salzburg was a most honorable one. It placed him in a state of dignity which, though eminently gratifying, was less calculated to rouse inspiration and ambition than the stormier career of his greater brother. Notwithstanding this fact, he has left something like twenty-eight masses, two requiems, 114 graduals, 66 offertories, and much other miscellaneous church music; songs, choruses (the earliest four-part *a capella* songs for men's voices); thirty symphonies (not to be compared in value to his brother's), and numerous smaller instrumental pieces! But a peculiar form of modesty which made him averse to seeing his works in print confined his influence largely to local limits. It is a most fortunate fact that within these limits it fell upon so fertile a ground. For young Mozart was most keen in his observation of Haydn's work, appreciated its value and received the first of those valuable lessons that the greater Joseph taught him in this roundabout fashion.

C. S.

CHAPTER III

THE VIENNESE CLASSICS: HAYDN AND MOZART

Social aspects of the classic period; Vienna, its court and its people—Joseph Haydn—Haydn's work; the symphony; the string quartet—Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart—Mozart's style; Haydn and Mozart; the perfection of orchestral style—Mozart and the opera; the Requiem; the mission of Haydn and Mozart.

I

WE have prefaced the last chapter with a review of the political and literary forces leading up to the classic period. A brief survey of social conditions may similarly aid the reader in supplying a background to the important characters of this period and the circumstances of their careers. First, we shall avail ourselves of the picturesque account given by George Henry Lewes in his 'Life of Goethe.' 'Remember,' he says, 'that we are in the middle of the eighteenth century. The French Revolution is as yet only gathering its forces together; nearly twenty years must elapse before the storm breaks. The chasm between that time and our own is vast and deep. Every detail speaks of it. To begin with science—everywhere the torch of civilization—it is enough to say that chemistry did not then exist. Abundant materials, indeed, existed, but that which makes a science, viz., the power of *prevision* based on *quantitative* knowledge, was still absent; and alchemy maintained its place among the conflicting hypotheses of the day. . . . This age, so incredulous in religion, was credulous in science. In spite of all the labors of the encyclopedists, in spite of all the philo-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

sophic and religious "enlightenment," in spite of Voltaire and La Mettrie, it was possible for Count St. Germain and Cagliostro to delude thousands: and Casanova found a dupe in the Marquise d'Urfé, who believed he could restore her youth and make the moon impregnate her! * It was in 1774 that Messmer astonished Vienna with his marvels of mystic magnetism. The secret societies of Freemasons and Illuminati, mystic in their ceremonies and chimerical in their hopes—now in quest of the philosopher's stone, now in quest of the perfectibility of mankind—a mixture of religious, political, and mystical reveries, flourished in all parts of Germany, and in all circles.

'With science in so imperfect a condition we are sure to find a corresponding poverty in material comfort and luxury. High-roads, for example, were only found in certain parts of Germany; Prussia had no *chaussée* till 1787. Mile-stones were unknown, although finger-posts existed. Instead of facilitating the transit of travellers, it was thought good political economy to obstruct them, for the longer they remained the more money they spent in the country. A century earlier stage coaches were known in England; but in Germany public conveyances were few and miserable; nothing but open carts with unstuffed seats. Diligences on springs were unknown before 1800,' . . . and we have the word of Burney and of Mozart that travel by post was nothing short of torture! †

If we examine into the manners, customs, and tastes of the period we are struck with many apparently absurd contradictions. Men whose nature, bred in gen-

* Superstition was still so widespread that Paganini was actually forced to produce evidence that he did not derive his 'magic' from the evil one.

† Burney in describing his travels says: 'So violent are the jolts, and so hard are the seats, of German post wagons, that a man is rather kicked than carried from one place to another.' Mozart in a letter recounting to his father his trip from Salzburg to Munich avows that he was compelled to raise himself up by his arms and so remain suspended for a good part of the way!

SOCIAL ASPECTS

erations of fighting, was brutal in its very essence outwardly affected a truly inordinate love of ceremony and lavish splendor. The same dignitaries who discussed for hours the fine distinctions of official precedence, or the question whether princes of the church should sit in council on green seats or red, like the secular potentates, would use language and display manners the coarseness of which is no longer tolerated except in the lowest spheres of society. While indulging in the grossest vulgarities and even vices, and while committing the most wanton cruelties, this race of petty tyrants expended thousands upon the glitter and tinsel with which they thought to dazzle the eyes of their neighbors. While this is more true of the seventeenth than of the eighteenth century, and while Europe was undergoing momentous changes, conditions were after all not greatly improved in the period of Haydn and Mozart. The graceful Italian melody which reigned supreme at the Viennese court, or the glitter of its rococo salons, found a striking note of contrast in the broad dialect of Maria Theresa and the 'boiled bacon and water' of Emperor Joseph's diet. A stronger paradox than the brocade and ruffled lace of a courtier's dress and the coarse behavior of its wearer could hardly be found.

The great courts of Europe, Versailles, Vienna, etc., were imitated at the lesser capitals in every detail, as far as the limits of the princes' purses permitted. As George Henry Lewes says of Weimar, 'these courts but little corresponded with those conceptions of grandeur, magnificence, or historical or political importance with which the name of court is usually associated. But, just as in gambling the feelings are agitated less by the greatness of the stake than by the variations of fortune, so, in social gambling of court intrigue, there is the same ambition and agitation, whether the green cloth be an empire or a duchy. Within its limits Saxe-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

Weimar, for instance, displayed all that an imperial court displays in larger proportions. It had its ministers, its chamberlains, pages, and sycophants. Court favor and disgrace elevated and depressed as if they had been imperial smiles or autocratic frowns. A standing army of six hundred men, with cavalry of fifty hussars, had its war department, with war minister, secretary, and clerk. Lest this appear too ridiculous,' Lewes adds that 'one of the small German princes kept a corps of hussars, which consisted of a colonel, six officers and two privates!' Similarly every prince, great or petty, gathered about him, for his greater glory, the disciples of the graceful arts. Not a count, margrave, or bishop but had in his retinue his court musicians, his organists, his court composer, his band and choir, all of whom were attached to their master by ties of virtually feudal servitude, whose social standing was usually on a level with domestic servants and who were often but wretchedly paid. We have had occasion to refer to a number of the more important centres, such as Berlin, where Frederick the Great had Johann Quantz, Franz Benda, and Emanuel Bach as musical mentors; Dresden, where Augustus the Third had Hasse and Porpora;* Stuttgart, where Karl Eugen gave Jommelli a free hand; Mannheim, where Karl Theodor gathered about him that genial band of musical reformers with Stamitz at their head; and Salzburg, where Archbishop Sigismund maintained Michael Haydn, Leopold Mozart, and many another talented musician.

As for the greater courts, they became the *nuclei* for aggregations of men of genius, to many of whom the world owes an everlasting debt of gratitude, but who often received insufficient payment, and who, in

* After Augustus' death, in 1763, musical life at this court deteriorated, though Naumann was retained as kapellmeister by Charles, Augustus's son.

VIENNA—COURT AND PEOPLE

some cases, even suffered indignities at the hands of their masters which are calculated to rouse the anger of an admiring posterity. London and Paris were, of course, as they had been for generations, the most brilliant centres—the most liberal and the richest in opportunities for musicians of talent or enterprise. At the period of which we speak the court of George II (and later George III) harbored Johann Christian Bach, Carl Friedrich Abel, and Pietro Domenico Paradies; at the court of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette Rameau was in his last years, while Gluck and Piccini were the objects of violent controversy, while Philidor, Monsigny, and Grétry were delighting audiences with *opéra comique*, and while a valiant number of instrumentalists, like Gossec, Gaviniès, Schobert, and Eckhard, were building up a French outpost of classicism. Capitals which had but recently attained international significance, like Stockholm and St. Petersburg, assiduously emulated the older ones; at the former, for instance, Gustavus III patronized Naumann, and at the latter Catherine II entertained successively Galuppi, Traetto, Paesiello, and Sarti.

But Vienna was now the musical capital of Europe. It was the concentrated scene of action where all the chief musical issues of the day were fought out. There the Mannheim school had its continuation, soon after its inception; there Haydn and Mozart found their greatest inspiration—as Beethoven and Schubert did after them—it remained the citadel of musical Germany, whose supremacy was now fairly established. It is significant that Burney, in writing the results of his musical investigations on the continent, devotes one volume each to Italy and France but two to Germany, notwithstanding his strong Italian sympathies. However, the reason for this is partly the fact that Germany was to an Englishman still somewhat of a wilderness, and that the writer felt it incumbent upon him to give

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

some general details of the condition of the country. We can do no better than quote some of his observations upon Vienna in order to familiarize the reader with the principal characters of the drama for which it was the stage.*

After describing the approach to the city, which reminds him of Venice, and his troubles at the customs, where his books were 'even more scrupulously read than at the inquisition of Bologna,' he continues: 'The streets are rendered doubly dark and dirty by their narrowness, and by the extreme height of the houses; but, as these are chiefly of white stone and in a uniform, elegant style of architecture, in which the Italian taste prevails, *as well as in music*, there is something grand and magnificent in their appearance which is very striking; and even those houses which have shops on the ground floor seem like palaces above. Indeed, the whole town and its suburbs appear at the first glance to be composed of palaces rather than of common habitations.'

Now for the life of the city. 'The diversions of the common people . . . are such as seem hardly fit for a civilized and polished nation to allow. Particularly the combats, as they are called, or baiting of wild beasts, in a manner much more savage and ferocious than our bull-baiting, etc.' The better class, of course, found its chief amusement in the theatres, but the low level of much of this amusement may be judged from the fact that rough horse-play was almost necessary to the success of a piece. Shortly before Burney's visit the customary premiums for actors who would 'voluntarily submit to be kicked and cuffed' were abolished, with the result that theatres went bankrupt 'because of the insufferable dullness and inactivity of the actors.' By a mere chance Burney witnessed a performance of

* Cf. Charles Burney: 'The Present State of Music in Germany,' London, 1773.

VIENNA—COURT AND PEOPLE

Lessing's *Emilia Galotti*, which as a play shocked his sensibilities, but he speaks in admiring terms of the orchestra, which played 'overtures and act-tunes' by Haydn, Hoffman, and Vanhall. At another theatre the pieces were so full of invention that it seemed to be music of some other world.

Musically, also, the mass at St. Stephen's impressed him very much: 'There were violins and violoncellos, though it was not a festival,' and boys whose voices 'had been well cultivated.' At night, in the court of his inn, two poor scholars sang 'in pleasing harmony,' and later 'a band of these singers performed through the streets a kind of glees in three and four parts.' 'Soldiers and common people,' he says, 'frequently sing in parts, too,' and he is forced to the conclusion that 'this whole country is certainly very musical.'

Through diplomatic influence our traveller is introduced to the Countess Thun (afterwards Mozart's patron), 'a most agreeable lady of very high rank, who, among other talents, possesses as great skill in music as any person of distinction I ever knew; she plays the harpsichord with that grace, ease, and delicacy which nothing but female fingers can arrive at.' Forthwith he meets 'the admirable poet Metastasio, and the no less admirable musician Hasse,' as well as his wife, Faustina, both very aged; also 'the chevalier Gluck, one of the most extraordinary geniuses of this, or perhaps any, age or nation,' who plays him his *Iphigénie*, just completed, while his niece, Mlle. Marianne Gluck, sang 'in so exquisite a manner that I could not conceive it possible for any vocal performance to be more perfect.' He hears music by 'M. Hoffman, an excellent composer of instrumental music'; by Vanhall, whom he meets and whose pieces 'afforded me such uncommon pleasure that I should not hesitate to rank them among the most complete and perfect compositions for many instruments which the art of music can boast(!)'; also

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

some 'exquisite quartets by Haydn, executed in the utmost perfection'; and he attends a comic opera by 'Signor Salieri, a scholar of M. Gassman,' at which the imperial family was present, his imperial majesty being extremely attentive 'and applauding very much.' * 'His imperial majesty' was, of course, Joseph II, who we know played the violoncello, and was, in Burney's words, 'just musical enough for a sovereign prince.' The entire imperial family was musical, and the court took its tone from it. All the great houses of the nobility—Lichtenstein, Lobkowitz, Auersperg, Fürnberg, Morzin—maintained their private bands or chamber musicians. Our amusing informant, in concluding his account of musical Vienna, says: 'Indeed, Vienna is so rich in composers and incloses within its walls such a number of musicians of superior merit that it is but just to allow it to be among German cities the imperial seat of music as well as of power.'

It need hardly be repeated that Italian style was still preferred by the society of the period, just as Italian manners and language were affected by the nobility. Italian was actually the language of the court, and how little German was respected is seen from the fact that Metastasio, the man of culture *par excellence*, though living in Vienna through the greater part of his life, spoke it 'just enough to keep himself alive.' Haydn, like many others, Italianized his name to 'Giuseppe' and Mozart signed himself frequently Wolfgango Amadeo Mozart!

This, then, is the city in which Haydn and Mozart were to meet for the first time just one year after Burney's account. Though the first was the other's

* Among other musicians he met is old Wagenseil, who was confined to his couch, but had the harpsichord wheeled to him and 'played me several *capriccios* and pieces of his own composition in a very spirited and masterly manner.' Merely mentioned are Ditters, Huber, Mancini, the great lutenist Kohaut, the violinist La Motte, and the oboist Venturini.

JOSEPH HAYDN

senior by twenty-four years their great creative periods are virtually simultaneous. They date, in fact, from this meeting, which marks the beginning of their influence upon each other and their mutual and constant admiration. Both already had brilliant careers behind them as performers and composers, and it becomes our duty now to give separate accounts of these careers.

C. S.

II

JOSEPH HAYDN

The boundaries of Hungary, the home of one of the most musical peoples of the world, lies only about thirty miles from Vienna. Here, it is said, in every two houses will be found three violins and a lute. Men and women sing at their work; children are reared in poverty and song. In such a community, in the village of Rohrau, near the border line between Austria and Hungary, lived Matthias Haydn, wagoner and parish sexton, with Elizabeth, his wife. They were simple peasant people, probably partly Croatian in blood, with rather more intelligence than their neighbors. After his work was done Matthias played the harp and Elizabeth sang, gathering the children about her to share in the simple recreation. Franz Joseph, the second of these children, born March 31, 1732, gave signs of special musical intelligence, marking the time and following his mother in a sweet, childish voice at a very early age. When he was six he was put in the care of a relative named Frankh, living in Hainburg, for instruction in violin and harpsichord playing, and in singing. Frankh seems to have been pretty rough with the youngster, but his instruction must have been good as far as it went, for two years later he was noticed by Reutter, chapel master at St. Stephen's

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

Cathedral in Vienna, and allowed to enter the choir school.

Reutter was considered a great musician in his day—he was ennobled in 1740—but he did not distinguish himself by kind treatment of little Joseph, who was poorly clad, half starved, and indifferently taught. The boy, however, seems, even at this early age, to have had a definite idea of what he wanted, and doggedly pursued his own path. He got what instruction he could from the masters of the school, purchased two heavy and difficult works on thoroughbass and counterpoint, spent play hours in practice on his clavier, and filled reams of paper with notes. He afterwards said that he remembered having two lessons from von Reutter in ten years. When he was seventeen years old his voice broke, and, being of no further service to the chapel master, he was turned out of the school on a trivial pretext.

The period that followed was one that even the sweet-natured man must sometimes have wished to forget. He was without money or friends—or at least so he thought—and it is said he spent the night after leaving school in wandering about the streets of the city. Unknown to himself, however, the little singer at the cathedral had made friends, and with one of the humbler of these he found a temporary home. Another good Viennese lent him one hundred and fifty florins—a debt which Haydn not only soon paid, but remembered for sixty years, as an item in his will shows. He soon got a few pupils, played the violin at wedding festivals and the like, and kept himself steadily at the study of composition. He obtained the clavier sonatas of Emanuel Bach and mastered their style so thoroughly that the composer afterward sent him word that he alone had fully mastered his writings and learned to use them.

At twenty Haydn wrote his first mass, and at about

JOSEPH HAYDN

the same time received a considerable sum for composing the music to a comic opera. He exchanged his cold attic for a more comfortable loft which happened to be in the same house in which the great Metastasio lived. The poet was impressed by Haydn's gifts and obtained for him the position of music master in an important Spanish family, resident in Vienna.

In this way, step by step, the fortunes of the young enthusiast improved. He made acquaintances among musical folk, and occasionally found himself in the company of men who had mounted much higher on the professional ladder than himself. One of these was Porpora, already successful and of international fame. Porpora was at that time singing master in the household of Correr, the Venetian ambassador at Vienna, and he proposed that Haydn should act as his accompanist and incidentally profit by so close an acquaintance with his 'method.' Thus Haydn was included in the ambassador's suite when they went to the baths of Mannersdorf, on the border of Hungary. At the soirées and entertainments of the grandees at Mannersdorf Haydn met some of the well-known musicians of the time—Bonno, Wagenseil, Gluck, and Ditters—becoming warmly attached to the last-named. His progress in learning Porpora's method, however, was not so satisfactory. The mighty man had no time for the obscure one; the difficulty was obvious. But Haydn, as always, knew what he wanted and did not hesitate to make himself useful to Porpora in order to get the instruction he needed. He was young and had no false pride about being fag to a great man for a purpose. His good-natured services won the master over; and so Haydn was brought into direct connection with the great exponent of Italian methods and ideas.

In 1755 he wrote his first quartet, being encouraged by a wealthy amateur, von Fürnberg, who, at his country home, had frequent performances of chamber

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

music. Haydn visited Fürnberg and became so interested in the composition of chamber music that he produced eighteen quartets during that and the following year. About this time he became acquainted with the Count and Countess Thun, cultivated and enthusiastic amateurs, whose names are remembered also in connection with Mozart, Gluck, and Beethoven. Haydn instructed the Countess Thun both in harpsichord playing and in singing, and was well paid for his services.

The same Fürnberg that drew the attention of Haydn to the composition of string quartets also recommended him to his first patron, Count Morzin, for the position of chapel master and composer at his private estate in Bohemia, near Pilsen. It was there, in 1759, that Haydn wrote his first symphony. He received a salary of about one hundred dollars a year, with board and lodging. With this munificent income he decided to marry, even though the rules of his patron permitted no married men in his employ.

Haydn's choice had settled on the youngest daughter of a wig-maker of Vienna named Keller; but the girl, for some unknown reason, decided to take the veil. In his determination not to lose so promising a young man, the wig-maker persuaded the lover to take the eldest daughter, Maria Anna, instead of the lost one. The marriage was in every way unfortunate. Maria Anna was a heartless scold, selfish and extravagant, who, as her husband said, cared not a straw whether he was an artist or a shoemaker. Haydn soon gave up all attempts to live with her, though he supplied her with a competence. She lived for forty years after their marriage, and shortly before she died wrote to Haydn, then in London, for a considerable sum of money with which to buy a small house, 'as it was a very suitable place for a widow.' For once Haydn refused both the direct and the implied request, neither

JOSEPH HAYDN

sending her the money nor making her a widow. He outlived her, in fact, by nine years, purchased the house himself after his last visit to London and spent there the remainder of his life.

To go back, however, to his professional career. Count Morzin was unfortunately soon obliged to disband his players and the change that consequently occurred was one of the important crises of Haydn's life. He was appointed second chapel master to Prince Anton Esterházy, a Hungarian nobleman, whose seat was at Eisenstadt. Here Haydn was to spend the next thirty years, here the friendships and pleasures of his mature life were to lie, and here his genius was to ripen.

The Esterházy band comprised sixteen members at the time of Haydn's arrival, all of them excellent performers. Their enthusiasm and support did much to stimulate the new chapel master, even as his arrival infused a new spirit into the concerts. The first chapel master, Werner, a good contrapuntal scholar, took the privilege of age and scoffed at Haydn's new ideas, calling him a 'mere fop.' The fact that they got on fairly well together is surely a tribute to Haydn's good nature and genuine humbleness of spirit. The old prince soon died, being succeeded by his brother, Prince Nicolaus. When Werner died some five years later Haydn became sole director. Prince Nicolaus increased the orchestra and lent to Haydn all the support of a sympathetic lover of music, as well as princely generosity. He prepared for himself a magnificent residence, with parks, lakes, gardens, and hunting courses, at Esterház, where royal entertainments were constantly in progress. Daily concerts were given, besides operas and special performances for all sorts of festivals. The seclusion of the country was occasionally exchanged for brief visits to Vienna. In 1773 the Empress Maria Theresa—she who, as Electoral Princess, had studied singing with Porpora—was entertained at Esterház and

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

heard the first performance of the symphony which bears her name. In 1780 Haydn wrote, for the opening of a new theatre at Esterhàz, an opera which was also performed before royalty at Vienna. He composed the 'Last Seven Words' in 1785, and in the same year Mozart dedicated to him six quartets in terms of affectionate admiration.

By the death of Prince Nicolaus, in 1790, Haydn lost not only a patron but a friend whom he sincerely loved. His life at Esterhàz was, on the other hand, full of work and conscientious activity in conducting rehearsals, preparing for performances, and in writing new music. On the other hand, it was curiously restricted in scope, isolated from general society, and detached from all the artistic movements of his period. His relations with the prince were genial and friendly, apparently quite unruffled by discord. Esterhàzy, though very much the grandee, was indulgent, and not only allowed his chapel master much freedom in his art, but also recognized and respected his genius. The system of patronage never produced a happier example of the advantages and pleasures to be gained by both patron and follower; but, after all, a comment of Mr. Hadow seems most pertinent to the situation: 'It is worthy of remark that the greatest musician ever fostered by a systematic patronage was the one over whose character patronage exercised the least control.' It is Haydn, of course, who is the subject of this remark.

There was, at that time, an enterprising violinist and concert manager, Johann Peter Salomon, travelling on the continent in quest of 'material' for his next London season. As soon as news of the death of Prince Nicolaus reached Salomon, he started for Vienna with the determination to take Haydn back with him to London. Former proposals for a season in London had always been ignored by Haydn, who considered himself bound not to abandon his prince. Now that he was

JOSEPH HAYDN

free, Salomon's persuasions were successful. Haydn, nearly sixty years of age, undertook his first long journey, embarking on the ocean he had never before seen, and going among a people whose language he did not know. He was under contract to supply Salomon with six new symphonies.

They reached London early in the year 1791, and Haydn took lodgings, which seemed very costly to his thrifty mind, with Salomon at 18 Great Pulteney street. The concerts took place from March till May, Salomon leading the orchestra, which consisted of thirty-five or forty performers, while Haydn conducted from the pianoforte. The enterprise was an immediate success. Haydn's symphonies happened to hit the taste of the time, and his fame as composer was supplemented by great personal popularity. People of the highest rank called upon him, poets celebrated him in verse, and crowds flocked to the concerts.

Heretofore Haydn's audiences had usually consisted of a small number of people whose musical tastes were well cultivated but often conventional; now he was eagerly listened to by larger and more heterogeneous crowds, whose enthusiasm reacted happily upon the composer. He wrote not only the six symphonies for the subscription concerts, but a number of other works—*divertimenti* for concerted instruments, a nocturne, string quartets, a clavier trio, songs, and a cantata—and was much in demand for other concerts. At the suggestion of Dr. Burney, the University of Oxford conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Music. The prince of Wales invited him to visit at one of the royal residences; his portrait was painted by famous artists; everybody wished to do him honor. The directors of the professional concerts tried to induce him to break his engagements with Salomon, but, failing in this, they engaged a former pupil of Haydn's, Ignaz Pleyel from Strassburg, and the two musicians conducted

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

rival concerts. The rivalry, however, was wholly friendly, so far as Haydn and his pupil were concerned. He visited Windsor and the races, and was present at the Handel commemoration in Westminster Abbey, where he was much impressed by a magnificent performance of 'The Messiah.'

After a stay of a year and a half in London Haydn returned to Vienna, travelling by way of Bonn, where he met Beethoven, who afterward came to him for instruction. Arriving in Vienna in July, 1792, he met with an enthusiastic reception. Early in 1794 Salomon induced him, under a similar contract, to make another journey to London, and to supply six new works for the subscription concerts. Again Haydn carried all before him. The new symphonies gained immediate favor; the former set was repeated, and many pieces of lesser importance were performed. The famous virtuosi, Viotti and Dussek, took part in the benefits for Haydn and Salomon. Haydn was again distinguished by the court, receiving even an invitation to spend the summer at Windsor, which he declined. In every respect the London visits were a brilliant success, securing a competence for Haydn's old age, additional fame, and a number of warm personal friendships whose memory delighted him throughout the remaining years of his life.

On his return to Vienna fresh honors awaited the master, who was never again to travel far from home. During his absence a monument and bust of himself had been placed in a little park at Rohrau, his native village. Upon being conducted to the place by his friends he was much affected, and afterwards accompanied the party to the modest house in which he was born, where, overcome with emotion, he knelt and kissed the threshold. In Vienna concerts were arranged for the production of the London symphonies, and many new works were planned. One of the most

JOSEPH HAYDN

interesting of these was the 'National Hymn,' composed in 1797, to words written by the poet Hauschka. On the birthday of the Emperor Franz II the air was sung simultaneously at the National Theatre in Vienna and at all the principal theatres in the provinces. Haydn also used the hymn as the basis of one of the movements in the Kaiser Quartet, No. 77.

The opportunity afforded Haydn in London of becoming more familiar with the work of Handel had a striking effect upon his genius, turning it toward the composition of oratorios. His reputation was high, but it was destined to soar still higher. Through Salomon, Haydn had received a modified version of Milton's 'Paradise Lost,' compiled by Lidley. This, translated into German by van Swieten, formed the libretto of 'The Creation,' composed by Haydn in a spirit of great humbleness and piety. It was first performed in Vienna in 1798 and immediately produced a strong impression, the audience, as well as the composer, being deeply moved. Choral societies were established for the express purpose of giving it, rival societies in London performed it during the season of 1800, and it long enjoyed a popularity scarcely less than that of 'The Messiah.' Even with this important work his energy was not dulled. Within a short time after the completion of 'The Creation' he composed another oratorio, 'The Seasons,' to words adapted from Thomson's poem. This also sprang into immediate favor, and at the time of its production, at least, gained quite as much popularity as 'The Creation.'

But the master's strength was failing. After 'The Seasons' he wrote but little, chiefly vocal quartets and arrangements of Welsh and Scottish airs. On his seventy-third birthday Mozart's little son Wolfgang, aged fourteen, composed a cantata in his honor and came to him for his blessing. Many old friends sought out the aged man, now sick and often melancholy, and

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

paid him highest honors. His last public appearance was in March, 1808, at a performance of 'The Creation' at the university in Vienna, conducted by Salieri. Overcome with fatigue and emotion Haydn was carried home after the performance of the first part, receiving as he departed the respectful homage of many distinguished people, among whom was Beethoven. From that time his strength waned, and, on May 31, 1809, he breathed his last. He was buried in a churchyard near his home; but, in 1820, at the command of Prince Anton Esterházy, his body was removed to the parish church at Eisenstadt, where so many years of his tranquil life had been spent.

It is of no small value to consider Haydn the man, before even Haydn the musician, for many of the qualities which made him so respected and beloved as a man were the bedrock upon which his genius was built. There was little of the obviously romantic in his life, nearly all of which was spent within a radius of thirty miles; but it glows with kindness, good temper, and sterling integrity. He was loyal to his emperor and his church; thrifty, generous to less fortunate friends and needy relatives, generous, also, with praise and appreciation. Industrious and methodical in his habits, he yet loved a jest or a harmless bit of fooling. He was droll and sunny tempered, modest in his estimate of himself, but possessing at the same time a proper knowledge of his powers. He was not beglamored by the favor of princes; and, while steadfast in the pursuit of his mission, seemed, nevertheless, to have been without ambition, in the usual sense, even as he was without malice, avarice, or impatience. Good health and good humor were the accompaniment of a gentle, healthy piety. These qualities caused him to be beloved in his lifetime; and they rank him, as a man, forever apart from the long list of geniuses whose lives have been torn asunder by passions, by undue sensitiveness,

RISE OF THE SYMPHONY

by excesses, or overweening ambition—all that is commonly understood by 'temperament.' The flame of Haydn's temperament burned clearly and steadily, even if less intensely; and the record of his life causes a thrill of satisfaction for his uniform and consistent rightness, his few mistakes.

It remains now to consider the nature of the service rendered by this remarkable man to his art, through the special types of composition indissolubly connected with his name. These are the symphony and the quartet.

III

The early history of the development of the symphony is essentially that of the development of the sonata, which we have described in the last chapter. When Joseph Haydn actually came upon the scene as composer, the term symphony, or 'sinfonia,' had been applied to compositions for orchestra, though these pieces bore little resemblance to modern productions. They were usually written in three movements, two of them being rather quick and lively, with a slow one between, and were scored for eight parts—four strings, two oboes or two flutes, and two 'cors de chasse,' or horns. Often the flutes or oboes were used simply to reinforce the strings, while the horns sustained the harmony. The figured bass was still in use, often transferred, however, to the viol di gamba, and the director used the harpsichord. The treatment of the parts was still crude and stiff, showing little feeling for the tone color of the instruments, balancing of parts, or variety of treatment.

The internal structure, also, was still very uncertain. The first movement, now usually written in strict sonata form, did not then uniformly contain the two contrasting themes, nor the codas and episodes of

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

the modern schools; and the working-out section and recapitulation were seldom clearly defined. Even in the poorest examples, however, the sonata scheme was generally vaguely present; and in the best often definitely marked. We must not lose sight, however, of the epoch-making work of Stamitz and his associates at Mannheim, both in the fixing of symphonic form and the advancement of instrumental technique. Stamitz's Opus I appeared, it will be recalled, in 1751; Dittersdorf's emulation of the Mannheim symphonies began about 1761. The intervening decade was a period of experiment and constant improvement. Haydn, though his first symphony, composed in 1759, showed none of the new influence, must have been cognizant of the advance.

Haydn's first symphony, written when he was twenty-seven, is described by Pohl as being a 'small work in three movements, for two violins, viola, bass, two hautboys, and two horns; cheerful and unpretending in character.' From this time on his experiments in the symphonic form were continuous, and more than one hundred examples are credited to him. He was so situated as to be able to test his work by actual performance. To this fortunate circumstance may be attributed the fact that he made great improvements in orchestration, and that he gained steadily in clearness of outline, variety of treatment, and enlargement of ideas.

In five years Haydn composed thirty symphonies, besides many other pieces. His reputation spread far beyond the bounds of Austria, and the official gazette of Vienna called him 'our national favorite.' His seclusion furthered his originality and versatility, and his history seems a singularly marked example of growth from within, rather than growth according to the currents of contemporary taste. By 1790 the number of symphonies had reached one hundred and ten, and the steps of his development can be clearly traced.

RISE OF THE SYMPHONY

There are traces of the old traditions in the doubling of the parts, sometimes throughout an entire movement; in the neglect of the wind instruments, sometimes for the entire adagio; and in long solo passages for bassoon or flute. Such peculiarities mark most of the symphonies up to 1790. Among these crudities, however, are signs of a steady advance in other respects. In the all-important first movement he more and more gave the second theme its rights, felt for new ways of developing the themes themselves, and elaborated the working-out section. The coda began to make its appearance, and the figured bass was abandoned. He established the practice of inserting the minuet between the slow movement and the finale, thus setting the example for the usual modern practice. The middle strings and wind instruments gradually grew more independent, the musical ideas more cultivated and refined, his orchestration clearer and more buoyant. His work is cheerful and gay, showing solid workmanship, sometimes deep emotion, rarely poetry. Under his hands the symphony, as an art form, gained stability, strength, and a technical perfection which was to carry the deeper message of later years, and the message of the great symphonic writers who followed him.

During Haydn's comparative solitude at Eisenstadt, however, a wonderful youth had come into the European musical world, had absorbed with the facility of genius everything that musical science had to offer, had learned from Haydn what could be done with the symphony as he had learned from Gluck what could be done with opera, and had outshone and outdistanced every composer living at the time. What Haydn was able to give to Mozart was rendered back to him with abundant interest. Mozart made use of a richer and more flexible orchestration, achieved greater beauty and poignancy of expression; and Haydn, while retaining his individuality, still shows marked traces of this

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

noble influence. The early works of Haydn were far in advance of his time, and were highly regarded; but they do not reveal the complete artist, and they have been almost entirely superseded in public favor by the London symphonies, composed after Mozart's death. In these he reaches heights he had never before attained, not only in the high degree of technical skill, but in the flood of fresh and genial ideas, and in new, impressive harmonic progressions. The method of orchestration is much bolder and freer. The parts are rarely doubled, the bass and viola have their individual work, the parts for the wind instruments are better suited to their character, and greater attention is paid to musical nuances. In these last works Haydn arrived at that 'spiritualization of music' which makes the art a vehicle not only for intellectual ideas, but for deep and earnest emotion.

Parallel with the growth of the symphonic form and its variety of treatment came also a real growth of the orchestra. The organization of 1750, consisting of four strings and four wind instruments, had become, in 1791, a group of thirty-five or forty pieces, consisting of, besides the strings, two flutes, two oboes, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets and drums. To these were sometimes added clarinets, and occasionally special instruments, such as the triangle or cymbals. Thus, by the end of the century, the form of the symphony, according to modern understanding, was practically established, and the orchestra organized nearly according to its present state. Haydn represents the last stage of the preparatory period, and he was, in a very genuine and literal sense, the founder, and to some degree the creator, of the modern symphony.

The string quartet had its birth almost simultaneously with the symphony, and is also the child of Haydn's genius. Its ancestors are considered by Jahn to be the *divertimenti* and *cassations* designed for table

THE STRING QUARTET.

music, serenades, and such entertainments, and written often in four or five movements for four wind instruments, wind instruments with strings, or even for clavier. This species of composition was transferred, curiously enough, to two violins, viola and bass—the latter being in time replaced by the 'cello. This combination of instruments, so easily available for private use, appealed especially to Haydn, and his later compositions for it are still recognized as models.

The quartet, like the symphony, is based on the sonata form, and developed gradually, in a manner similar to the larger work. Haydn's first attempt in this species was made at the age of twenty-three, and eighty-three quartets are numbered among his catalogued works. The early ones are very like the work of Boccherini, and consist of five short movements, with two minuets. As Haydn progressed his tendency was to make the movements fewer and longer. After Quartet No. 44 the four-movement form is generally used, and his craftsmanship grows more delicate. Gradually he filled the rather stiff and formal outline with ideas that are graceful and charming, even though they may sound somewhat elementary to modern ears. He recognized the fact that in the quartet each individual part must not be treated as solo, nor yet should the others be made to supply a mere accompaniment to the remainder. Each must have its rôle, according to the capacity of the instrument and the balance of parts. The best of Haydn's quartets exhibit not only a well-established form and a fine perception of the relation of the instruments, but also the more spiritual qualities—tenderness, playfulness, pathos. He is not often romantic, neither is there any trace of far-fetched mannerisms or fads. He gave the form a life and freshness which at once secured its popularity, even though the more scientific musicians of his day were inclined to regard it with

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

suspicion, as a trifling innovation. Nevertheless, it was the form which, together with the symphony, was to attest the greatness of Mozart and Beethoven; and it was from Haydn that Mozart, at least, learned its use.

It is impossible to estimate rightly Haydn's service to music without taking into account one of his most striking and original characteristics—his use of simple tunes and folk songs. Much light has been thrown on this phase of his genius by the labors of a Croatian scholar, F. X. Kuhac, and the results of his work have been given to the English-speaking world by Mr. Hadow. As early as 1762, in his D-major symphony, composed at Eisenstadt, Haydn began to use folk songs as themes, and he continued to do so, in symphonies, quartets, divertimenti, cantatas, and sacred music, to the very end of his career. In this respect he was unique among composers of his day. No other contemporaneous writer thought it fitting or beautiful to work rustic tunes into the texture of his music. Mozart is witty with the ease of a man of the world, quite different from the naïve drollery of Haydn, whose humor, though perhaps a trifle light and shallow, is always mobile, fresh, and gay. It is pointed out, moreover, by the writers above mentioned that the shapes of Haydn's melodic phrases are not those of the German, but of the Croatian folk song, and that the rhythms are correspondingly varied. Eisenstadt lies in the very centre of a Croatian colony, and Rohrau, Haydn's birthplace, has also a Croatian name. Many of its inhabitants are Croatian, and a name, strikingly similar to Haydn's was of frequent occurrence in that region. Add to this the fact that his music is saturated with tunes which have all the characteristics, both rhythmic and melodic, of the Croatian; that many tunes known to be of that origin are actually employed by him, and the presumption in favor of his Croatian inheritance is very strong.

HAYDN'S WORK

But Haydn's speech, like that of every genius, was not only that of his race, but of the world. He had the heart of a rustic poet unspoiled by a decayed civilization. Like Wordsworth, he used the speech of a whole nation, and lived to work out all that was in him. Although almost entirely self-taught, he mastered every scientific principle of musical composition known at his time. He was able to compose for the people without pandering to what was vicious or ignorant in their taste. He identified himself absolutely with secular music, and gave it a status equal to the music of the church. He took the idea of the symphony and quartet, while it was yet rather formless and chaotic, floating in the musical consciousness of the period as salt floats in the ocean, drew it from the surrounding medium, and crystallized it into an art form.

Something has already been said concerning Haydn's popularity in England, and the genuine appreciation accorded him in that country. Haydn himself remarked that he did not become famous in Germany until he had gained a reputation elsewhere. Even in his old age he remembered, rather pathetically, the animosity of certain of the Berlin critics, who had used him very badly in early life, condemning his compositions as 'hasty, trivial, and extravagant.' It is only another proof that Beckmesser never dies. Haydn was his own best critic, though a modest one, when he said, 'Some of my children are well bred, some ill bred, and, here and there, there is a changeling among them. . . . I know that God has bestowed a talent upon me, and I thank Him for it. I think I have done my duty, and been of use in my generation by my works.' He rises above all his contemporaries, except Mozart, as a lighthouse rises above the waves of the sea. With Mozart and Beethoven he formed the immortal trio whose individual work, each with its own quality and its own

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

weight, are the completion and the sum of the first era of orchestral music.

F. B.

IV

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Radically different from the career of Haydn is that of Mozart, which, indeed, has no parallel in the annals of music or any other art. It partakes so much of the marvellous as to defy and to upset all our notions of the growth of creative genius. What Haydn learned by years of endeavor and experience Mozart acquired as if by instinct. The forms evolved by the previous generation, that new elegance of melodic expression, the *finesse* of articulation and the principles of organic unity, all these were a heritage upon which he entered with full cognizance of their meaning and value. It was as though he had dreamed these things in a previous existence. They made up for him a language which he used more easily than other children use their mother tongue. It is a fact that he learned to read music earlier than words. What common children express in infantile prattle, this marvel of a boy expressed in musical sounds. At three he attempted to emulate his sister at clavier playing and actually picked out series of pleasing thirds; at four, he learned to play minuets which his father taught him 'as in fun' (a half-hour sufficed for one), and, at five, he composed others like them himself. At six, these compositions merited writing down, which his father did, and we have the dated notebook as evidence of these first stirrings of genius. At the age of seven Mozart appeared before the world as a composer. The two piano sonatas with violin accompaniment which he dedicated to the Princess Victoire have all the attributes of fin-

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

ished musical workmanship, and, even if his father retouched and corrected these and other early works, the performance, as that of a child, is none the less remarkable.

The extraordinary training and the wise guidance of the father, a highly educated musician, broad-minded and progressive, were the second great advantage accruing to Mozart, whose genius was thus led from the beginning into proper channels. Leopold Mozart, himself under the influence of the Mannheim school, naturally imparted to his son all the peculiarities of their style. Through him also the influence of Emanuel Bach became an early source of inspiration. Pure, simple melody with a natural obvious harmonic foundation was the musical ideal to which Mozart aspired from the first. Nevertheless, the study of counterpoint was never neglected in the training which his father gave him, though it was not until later, under the instruction of Padre Martini, that he came to appreciate its full significance and elevated beauty.

With Mozart the musical supremacy of Germany, first asserted by the instrumental composers of Mannheim and Berlin, is confirmed and extended to the field of vocal music and the opera. Mozart could accomplish this task only by virtue of his broad cosmopolitanism, which, like that of Gluck, enabled him to gather up in his grasp the achievements of the most diverse schools. To this cosmopolitanism he was predisposed by the circumstances of his birth as well as of his early life. The geographical position of Salzburg, where he was born in 1756, was, in a sense, a strategic one. Situated in the southernmost part of Germany, it was exposed to the influence of Italian taste; inhabited by a sturdy German peasantry and bourgeoisie, its sympathies were on the side of German art, and the musicians at court were, at the time of Mozart's birth, almost without exception Germans.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

Yet the echoes of the cultural life not only of Vienna, Munich, and Mannheim, but of Milan, Naples, and Paris, reached the narrow confines of this mountain fastness, this citadel of intolerant Catholicism.

But Mozart's cosmopolitanism was broader than this. He was but six years of age, gifted with a marvellous power of absorption, and impressionable to a degree, when his father began with him and his eleven-year-old sister, also highly talented and already an accomplished pianist, the three-years' journey—or concert tour, as we should say to-day—which took them to Munich, to Vienna, to Mannheim, to Brussels, Paris, London, and The Hague. They played before the sovereigns in all these capitals and were acclaimed prodigies such as the world had never seen. How assiduously young Mozart emulated the music of all the eminent composers he met is seen from the fact that four concertos until recently supposed to have been original compositions were simply rearrangements of sonatas by Schobert, Honauer, and Eckhardt.* Similarly, in London he carefully copied out a symphony by C. F. Abel, until recently reckoned among his own works; and a copy of a symphony by Michael Haydn, his father's colleague in Salzburg, has also been found among his manuscripts. But the most powerful influence to which he submitted in London was that of Johann Christian Bach, who determined his predilection for Italian vocal style and Italian opera.

Already, in 1770, when he and his father were upon their second artistic journey, he tried his hand both at Italian and German opera, with *La finta semplice* and *Bastien und Bastienne*, and it is significant that

* Johann Schobert especially caught the boy's fancy, though both his father and Baron Grimm, their most influential friend in Paris, depreciated his merits and tried to picture him as a small, jealous person. T. de Wyzewa and G. de St. Foix, in their study *Un maître inconnu de Mozart* (*Zeitschrift Int. Musik-Ges.*, Nov., 1908), and in their partially completed biography of Mozart, have clearly shown the powerful influence of the Paris master on the youthful composer.

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

during their production he was already exposed to the theories of Gluck, who brought out his *Alceste* in that year. But it must be said that neither of the two youthful works shows any traits of these theories. The first of them failed of performance in Vienna and was not produced until later at Salzburg; the other was presented under private auspices at the estate of the famous Dr. Messmer of 'magnetic' fame. But in the same year Mozart, then fourteen years of age, made his début in Italian *opera seria* with *Mitradite* at Milan. This was the climax of a triumphal tour through Italy, in the course of which he was made a member of the Philharmonic academies of Verona and Bologna, was given the Order of the Golden Spur by the Pope, and earned the popular title of *Il cavaliere filarmonico*.

Upon his return to Salzburg young Mozart became concert master at the archiepiscopal court, and partly under pressure of demands for occasional music, partly spurred on by a most extraordinary creative impulse, he turned out works of every description—ecclesiastical and secular; symphonies, sonatas, quartets, concertos, serenades, etc., etc. He had written no less than 288 compositions, according to the latest enumeration,* when, at the age of twenty-one, he was driven by the insufferable conditions of his servitude to take his departure from home and seek his fortune in the world. This event marked the period of his artistic adolescence. Accompanied by his mother he went over much of the ground covered during his journey as a prodigy, but where before there was universal acclaim he now met utter indifference, professional opposition and intrigue, and general lack of appreciation. However futile in a material sense, this broadening of his artistic horizon was of inestimable value to the ripening genius.

* T. de Wyzewa and G. de St. Foix in their scholarly work 'W.-A. Mozart' have catalogued and fixed the relative positions of all the Mozart compositions. This in a sense supersedes the famous catalogue made by Ludwig von Koechel (1862, Supplement 1864).

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

While equally sensitive to impressions as before, he no longer merely imitated, but caught the essence of what he heard and welded it by the power of his own genius into a new and infinitely superior musical idiom. Now for the first time he rises to the heights, to the exalted beauty of expression which has given his works their lasting value. Already in the fullness of his technical power, equipped with a musicianship which enabled him to turn to account every hint, every suggestion, this virtuoso in creation no less than execution fairly drank in the gospel of classicism. Mannheim became a new world to him, but in his very exploration of it he left the indelible footprints of his own inspiration.

If he met the Mannheim musicians on an equal footing it followed that he could approach those of Paris with a certain satirical condescension. But, if his genius *was* recognized, professional intrigue prevented his drawing any profit from it—he was reduced to teaching and catering to patronage in the most absurd ways, from writing a concerto for harp and flute (both of which he detested) to providing ballets for Noverre, the all-powerful dancer of the Paris opera. His adaptability to circumstances was extraordinary. But all to no avail; the total result of his endeavors was the commission to write a symphony for the *Concerts spirituels* then conducted by Le Gros. Nowhere else has he shown his power of adaptability in the same measure as in this so-called ‘Paris Symphony.’ It is, as Mr. Hadow says, perhaps the only piece of ‘occasional’ music that is truly classic. The circumstances of its creation appear to us ridiculous but are indicative of the musical intelligence of Paris at this time. The *premier coup d’archet*, the first attack, was a point of pride with the Paris orchestra, hence the piece had to begin with all the instruments at once, which feat, as soon as accomplished, promptly elicited loud applause. ‘What a fuss they make about that,’ wrote Mozart.

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

'In the devil's name, I see no difference. They just begin all together as they do elsewhere. It is quite ludicrous.' For the same reason the last movement of the Paris Symphony begins with a unison passage, *piano*, which was greeted with a hush. 'But directly the *forte* began they took to clapping.' Referring to the passage in the first *Allegro*, the composer says, 'I knew it would make an effect, so I brought it in again at the end, *da capo*.' And, despite those prosaic calculations, the symphony 'has not an unworthy bar in it,' and it was one of the most successful works played at these famous concerts. Yet Paris held out no permanent hope to Mozart and he was forced to return to service in Salzburg, under slightly improved circumstances.*

It is nothing short of tragic to see how the young artist vainly resisted this dreaded renewal of tyranny, and finally yielded, out of love for his father. His liberation came with the order to write a new opera, *Idomeneo*, for Munich in 1781. This work constitutes the transition from adolescence to maturity. It is the last of his operas to follow absolutely the precedents of the Italian *opera seria*, and its success definitely determined the course of his artistic career. In the same year he severed his connection with the Salzburg court (but not until driven to desperation and humiliated beyond words), settled in Vienna, and secured in a measure the protection of the emperor. But for his livelihood he had for a long time to depend upon concerts, until a propitious circumstance opened a new avenue for the exercise of his talents. Meantime he had experienced a new revelation. His genius had been brought into contact with that of Joseph Haydn,

* Mozart's mother, ill during the greater part of the Paris sojourn, died about the time of the symphony première. Griefstricken as he was, he wrote his father all the details of the performance and merely warned him that his mother was dangerously ill. At the same time he advised a close Salzburg friend of the event and begged him to acquaint his father with it as carefully as possible.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

whom he met personally at the imperial palace in 1781 during the festivities occasioned by the visit of Grand Duke Paul of Prussia.* This master's works now became the subject of his profound study, which bore almost immediate results in his instrumental works.

The propitious circumstance alluded to above lay in another direction. Joseph II had made himself the protector of the German drama in Vienna and had given the theatre a national significance. His patriotic convictions induced him to adopt a similar course with the opera, though his own personal tastes lay clearly in the direction of Italy. At any rate, he abolished the costly spectacular ballet and Italian opera and instituted in their stead a 'national vaudeville,' as the German opera was called. The theatre was opened in February, 1778, with a little operetta, *Die Bergknappen*, by Umlauf, and this was followed by a number of operas partly translated from the Italian or French; including *Röschen und Colas* by Monsigny, *Lucile, Silvain*, and *Der Hausfreund* by Grétry; and *Anton und Antonette* by Gossec. In 1781 the emperor commissioned Mozart to contribute to the répertoire a *singspiel*, and a suitable libretto was found in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. It had an extraordinary success. In the flush of his triumph Mozart married Constanze Weber, sister of the singer Aloysia Weber, the erstwhile sweetheart of Mannheim. This again complicated his financial circumstances; for his wife, loyal as she was, knew nothing of household economy. Not until 1787 did Mozart secure a permanent situation at the imperial court, and then with a salary of only eight hundred florins (four hundred dollars), 'too much for what I do, too little for what I could do,' as he wrote across his first receipt. His duties consisted in providing dance music for the court! Gluck died in the year of

* Another incident of this veritable carnival of music was the famous pianoforte competition between Mozart and Clementi.

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

Mozart's appointment, but his position with two thousand florins was not offered to Mozart. To the end of his days he had to endure pecuniary difficulties and even misery.

Intrigue of Italian colleagues, with Salieri, Gluck's pupil, at their head, moreover placed constant difficulties in Mozart's way, and when, in 1785, his 'Marriage of Figaro' was brought out in Vienna it came near being a total failure because of the purposely bad work of the Italian singers. But at Prague, shortly after, the opera aroused the greatest enthusiasm, and out of gratitude Mozart wrote his next opera, *Don Giovanni*, for that city (1787). In Vienna again it met with no success. In this same wonderful year he completed, within the course of six weeks, the three last and greatest of his symphonies.

In a large measure the composer's own character—his simple, childlike and loyal nature—stood in the way of his material success. When, in 1789, he undertook a journey to Berlin with Prince Lichnowsky Frederick William II offered him the place of royal *kapellmeister* with a salary of three thousand thalers. But his patriotism would not allow him to accept it in spite of his straitened circumstances; and when, after his return, he was induced to submit his resignation to the emperor, so that, like Haydn, he might seek his fortune abroad, he allowed his sentiment to get the better of him at the mere suggestion of imperial regret. The only reward for his loyalty was an order for another opera. This was *Così fan tutte*, performed in 1790.

During his Berlin journey Mozart had visited Leipzig and played upon the organ of St. Thomas' Church. His masterly performance there so astonished the organist, Doles, that, as he said, he thought the spirit of his predecessor, Johann Sebastian Bach, had been reincarnated. It is significant how thus late in

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

life Bach's influence opened new vistas to Mozart—for he had probably known so far only the Leipzig master's clavier compositions. It is related how, after a performance of a cantata in his honor, he was profoundly moved and, spreading the parts out on the organ bench, became immersed in deep study. The result is evident in his compositions of the last two years. During the last, 1791, he wrote *La clemenza di Tito*, another *opera seria*, for Prague, and his last and greatest German opera, *Die Zauberflöte*, for Vienna. The *Requiem*, by some considered the crowning work of his genius, was his last effort; he did not live to finish it. He died on December 5th, 1791, in abject misery, while the 'Magic Flute' was being played to crowded houses night after night on the outskirts of Vienna. The profits from the work meantime accrued to the benefit of the manager, Schikaneder, the 'friend' whom Mozart had helped out of difficulties by writing it. Mozart was buried in a common grave and the spot has remained unknown to this day.

* * * *

Thus, briefly, ran the life course of one of the greatest and, without question, the most gifted of musicians the world has seen. Within the short space of thirty-six years he was able to produce an almost countless series of works, the best of which still beguile us after a century and a half into unqualified admiration. They have lost none of their freshness and vitality, and it is even safe to say that they are better appreciated now than in Mozart's own day. The tender fragrant loveliness of his melodies, the caressing grace of his cadences will always remain irresistible; in sheer beauty, in pure musical essence, we shall not go beyond them. Much might be said of the eternal influence of Mozart on the latter-day disciples—we need only call to mind Weber, Brahms, Tschaikowsky, and Richard Strauss,

MOZART'S STYLE

whose own work is a frank and worthy tribute to his memory.

It has been said that Mozart's is the only music sufficient unto itself, requiring no elucidation, no 'program' whatever. Hence its appeal is the most immediate as well as the most general. It has that impersonal charm which contrives to ingratiate itself with personalities ever so remote, and to accommodate itself to every mood. Yet a profoundly human character lies at the bottom of it all. Mozart the simple, childlike, ingenuous, and generous; or Mozart the witty, full of abandon, of frank drollery and good humor. With what fortitude he bore poignant grief and incessant disappointment, how he submitted to indignities for the sake of others, is well known. But every attack upon his artistic integrity he met with stern reproof, and through trial and misery he held steadfast to his ideal as an artist. To Hoffmeister, the publisher, demanding more 'salable' music, he writes that he prefers to starve; Schikander, successful in making the master's talent subserve his own ends, gets no concession to the low taste of his motley audience. Inspired with the divinity of his mission, he subordinates his own welfare to that one end, and he breathes his last in the feverish labor over his final great task, the *Requiem*, 'his own requiem,' as he predicted.

V

We have endeavored to point out in our brief sketch of Mozart's life the chief influences to which he was exposed. The extent to which he assimilated and developed the various elements thus absorbed must determine his place in musical history. 'The history of every art,' says Mr. W. H. Hadow, 'shows a continuous interaction between form and content. The artist finds

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

himself confronted with a double problem: what is the fittest to say, and what is the fittest manner of saying it. . . . As a rule, one generation is mainly occupied with questions of design, another takes up the scheme and brings new emotional force to bear upon it, and thus the old outlines stretch and waver, the old rules become inadequate, and the form itself, grown more flexible through a fuller vitality, once more asserts its claim and attains a fuller organization.' The generation preceding Mozart and Haydn had settled for the time being the question of form. Haydn said, as it were, the last word in determining the design, applying it in the most diverse ways and pointing the road to further development. Mozart found it 'sufficient to his needs and set himself to fill it with a most varied content of melodic invention.' The analogy drawn by Mr. Hadow between the Greek drama and the classic forms of music is particularly apt: in both the 'plot' is constructed in advance and remains ever the same; the artist is left free to apply his genius to the poetic interpretation of situations, the delineation of character, the beauty of rhythm and verse. It was in these things that Mozart excelled. He brought nothing essentially new, but, by virtue of his consummate genius, he endowed the symphonic forms as he found them with a hitherto unequalled depth and force of expression, an individuality so indefinable that we can describe it only as 'Mozartian.' In no sense was Mozart a reformer. In opera, unlike Gluck, he did not find his limitations irksome, but knew how to achieve within these limitations an ideal of dramatic truth without detracting from the quality of his musical essence. His style is as independent of psychology as it is of formal interpretation, it is 'sufficient unto itself,' ineffable in its beauty, irresistible in its charm. This utter independence and self-sufficiency of style enabled him to use with equal success the vocal and instrumental

MOZART AND HAYDN

idioms. And in his work we actually see an assimilation of the two styles and an interchange of their individual elements.

Mozart's inspiration was primarily a melodic one and for that reason we see him purposely subordinating the harmonic substructure and often reducing it to its simplest terms. If he employs at times figures of accompaniment which are obvious and even trite, it is done with an evident purpose to throw into relief the individuality of his melodies, those rich broideries and graceful arabesques which Mozart knew how to weave about a simple 'tonic and dominant.' No composer ever achieved such variety within so limited a harmonic range. On the other hand, it has been truthfully said that Mozart was the greatest polyphonist between Bach and Brahms. He was able to make the most learned use of contrapuntal devices when occasion demanded, but never in the use of these devices did he descend to dry formalism. His *incidental* use of counterpoint often produces the most telling effects; the accentuation of a motive by imitation, a caressing counter-melody to add poignancy to an expressive phrase, the reciprocal germination of musical ideas, all these he applies with consummate science and without ever sacrificing ingenuous spontaneity. Again in his harmonic texture there are moments of daring which perplexed his contemporaries and even to-day are open to dispute. The sudden injection of a dissonant note into an apparently tranquil harmonic relation, such as in the famous C-major Quartet, which aroused such violent discussion when first heard, or in the first Allegro theme of the *Don Giovanni* overture, is his particularly favorite way of introducing 'color.'

This chromaticism of Mozart's is one of the striking differences between his music and Haydn's. 'Haydn makes his richest point of color by sheer abrupt modulation; Mozart by iridescent chromatic motion within

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

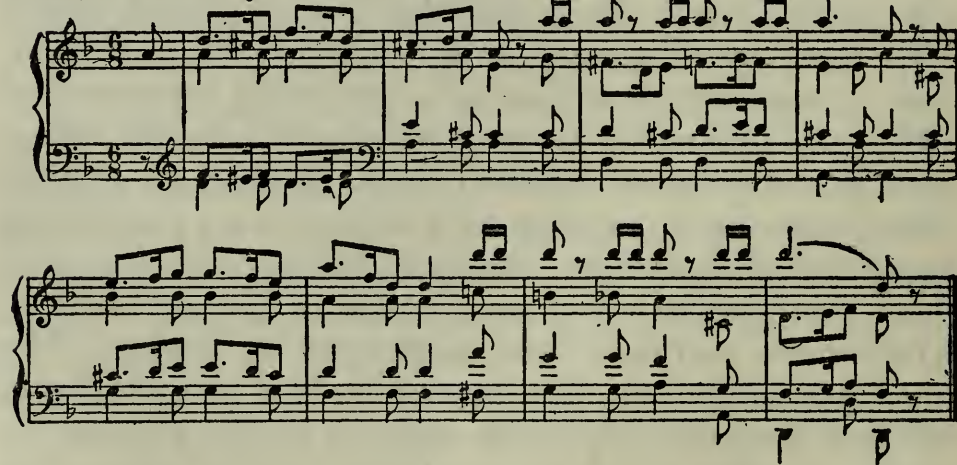
the limits of a clearly defined harmonic sequence.' * In drawing a further comparison between the two Viennese masters we find in Haydn a greater simplicity and directness of expression, a more unadorned, unhesitating utterance, as against Mozart, to whom perfectly

1

Haydn: Finale of Quartet in G (Op.33, No 5)



Mozart: Finale of Quartet in D-minor (K. 421)



chiselled phrases, a polished, graceful manner of speech are second nature, whether his mood is gay or sad, his emotions careless or deep. The distinction is aptly illustrated by the juxtaposition of the following two themes quoted in Vol. IV of the 'Oxford History of Music.'

* W. H. Hadow, in 'The Oxford History of Music.'

MOZART AND HAYDN

But the difference is not so much in phraseology as in the broader aspects of invention and method. The fundamental division lies, of course, in the character of the two men. Haydn, the simple, ingenuous peasant, whose moods range from sturdy humor to solid dignity; Mozart, the keen, vivacious, witty cosmopolitan, whose humor always tends to satire, but whose exalted moments are moments of soulful, subjective contemplation. His music is accordingly more epigrammatic, on the one hand, and of a deeper, rounder sonority, on the other. Mozart and Haydn first became acquainted with each other in 1780, when both had behind them long careers full of creative activity. It is significant, however, that practically all the works which to-day constitute our knowledge of them were created after this meeting, and neither their music nor the fact of their admiration for each other leaves any doubt as to the power and depth of their mutual influence. Mozart profited probably more in matters of technique and structure; Haydn in matters of refinement and delicacy.

The complete list of Mozart's works includes no less than twenty-one piano sonatas and fantasias (besides a number for four hands); forty-two violin sonatas; twenty-six string quartets; seven string quintets, several string duos and trios; forty-one symphonies; twenty-eight divertimenti, etc., for orchestra; twenty-five piano concertos; six violin concertos; and eighteen operas and other dramatic works, besides single movements for diverse instruments, chamber music for wind and for strings and wind, songs, arias, and ecclesiastical compositions of every form, including fifteen masses. But only a portion of these is of consequence to the music lover of our day; the portion which constitutes virtually the last decade of his activity. The rest, though full of grace and charm, has only historical significance.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

His piano sonatas, we have seen, followed the model of Schobert and, in some measure, of Emanuel Bach, but the style of these works, available to the amateur and valuable as study material, is more individual than that of either of the earlier masters and their musical worth is far superior. The first of them were written about 1774 for Count von Dürnitz, of Munich, and represent his contribution to the light, elegant style of the period. In some later ones he strikes a more serious note; dashing or majestic allegros alternate with caressing cantabiles, graceful andantes or adagios of delicious beauty and romantic expressiveness. The violin sonatas, though supposed to have been written chiefly for the diversion of his lady pupils (the instrument was still considered most suitable for feminine amusement), are full of beauty, strength, and dramatic expression.

The string quartets, the first of which he wrote during his Italian journey of 1770, are in his early period slight and unpretentious but lucid and delicate compositions, in which we may trace influences of Sammartini and Boccherini. From 1773 on, however, the influence of Haydn's genius is apparent. By 1781, when Mozart took up his residence in Vienna, quartet-playing had become one of the favorite pastimes of musical amateurs. Haydn was the acknowledged leader in this popular field and 'whoever ventured on the same field was obliged to serve under his banner.' During the period of 1782 to 1785 Mozart wrote a series of six quartets, which he dedicated to that master 'as the fruit of long and painful study inspired by his example.' After playing them over at Mozart's house (on such occasions Haydn took the first violin part, Dittersdorf the second, Mozart the viola, and Vanhall the 'cello) Haydn turned to Leopold Mozart and said: 'I assure you solemnly and as an honest man that I consider your son

MOZART AND HAYDN

to be the greatest composer of whom I have ever heard.' Like Haydn and Boccherini, Mozart was commissioned to write some quartets for the king of Prussia (William II), and, since his royal patron himself played the 'cello, he cleverly emphasized that instrument without, however, depriving the other instruments of their independent power of expression. Mozart's partiality for quartet writing is evident from the many sketches in that form which have been preserved. They are among the masterpieces of chamber music, as are also his string duos, trios, and, especially, his four great string quintets. The celebrated one in G minor is, as Jahn says, a veritable 'psychological revelation.' Few pieces in instrumental music express a mood of passionate excitement with such energy.'

Mozart's concertos for the piano and also those for the violin were written primarily for his own use. The best of them date from the period preceding his Paris journey, when he expected to make practical use of them, for he was a virtuoso of no mean powers on both instruments. There are six concertos for either instrument, every one full of pure beauty and a model of form. In them he substituted the classic sonata form for the variable pattern used in the earlier concertos, and hence he may be considered the creator of the classic concerto, his only definite contribution to the history of form. They are not merely brilliant pieces for technical display, but symphonic, both in proportion and import. In them are found some of the finest moments of his inspiration. 'It is the Mozart of the early concerti to whom we owe the imperishable matter of the Viennese period,' says Mr. Hadow, 'and the influences which helped to mold successively the style of Haydn, Beethoven, and Schubert.'

Of Mozart's symphonies and serenades, terms which in some cases are practically synonymous, there are

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

about eleven that are of lasting value and at least three that are imperishable. With the exception of the Paris symphony, 'a brilliant and charming *pièce d'occasion*,' which was referred to above, all of them were written during the Vienna period, and the three great ones flowed from the composer's pen within the brief space of six weeks in 1787, the year of *Don Giovanni*. In the matter of form again Mozart followed in the tracks of the Mannheim school. The usual three movements remain, but, like Haydn, he usually adds the minuet after the slow movement. The 'developed ternary form' is applied in the first and more and more frequently also in other movements, especially the last, where it takes the place of the lighter rondo. But the musical material is richer and its handling far more ingenious than that of his predecessors, just as the spiritual import is much deeper. The movements are more closely knit, they have a unity of emotion which clearly points in the direction of Beethoven's later works. There is, if not an *idée fixe*, at any rate a *sentiment fixe*. It is manifested in a multiplicity of ways: more consistent use of the principal thematic material in the 'working-out,' reassertion of themes after the 'transition' (the section leading from the exposition to the development), introductions which are, as it were, improvisations on the mood of the piece, and codas 'summing up' the subjective matter. This same unity exists between the different movements; a note of grief or passion sounded in the first movement is either reiterated in the last or else we feel that the composer has emerged from the struggle in triumph or noble joy. Only the minuet, an almost constant quantity with Mozart, brings a momentary relief or abandon to a lighter vein, if it is not itself, as in the G minor symphony, nobly dignified and touched with sadness.

In the use of orchestral instruments, too, Mozart

THE PERFECTION OF ORCHESTRAL STYLE

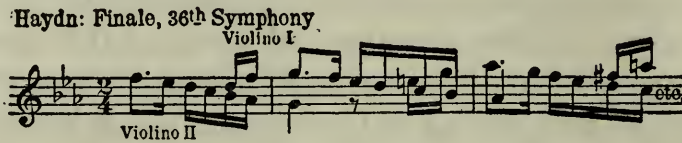
emulated the practice of the Mannheim composers. Their works were usually scored for eight parts, that is, two oboes or flutes and two horns, besides the usual string body. Clarinets were still rare at that time, and parts provided for them were for that reason arranged for optional use, being interchangeable with the oboe parts. Mozart, although he had heard them as early as 1778 at Mannheim, used them only in his later works,* and even then did not often employ that part of their range which reaches below the oboe's compass (still thinking of them as alternates for that instrument). But in the manner of writing for instruments Mozart's works show a real novelty. In the Mannheim symphonies the wood wind instruments usually doubled the string parts, but occasionally they were given long, sustained notes and the brass even went beyond mere 'accent notes' (*di rinforza*) to the extent of an occasional sustained note or any individual motive. Haydn and Mozart at first confirmed this practice, but in their later works they introduced a wholly new method, which Dr. Riemann calls 'filigree work' and which formed the basis of Beethoven's orchestral style. 'The idea to conceive the orchestra as a multiplicity of units, each of which may, upon proper occasion, interpose an essential word, without, however, protruding itself in the manner of a solo and thus disturbing in any way the true character of the symphonic ensemble, was foreign to the older orchestral music.' † A mere dialogue between individual instruments or bodies of instruments was, of course, nothing new, but the cutting up of a single melodic thread and having different instruments take it up alternately, as Haydn did, was an innovation, and immediately led to another step, viz.,

* It is a well-known fact that the moment of his first acquaintance with the instrument Mozart became enamored of its tone. No ear ever was more alive to the purely sensuous qualities of tone color.

† Riemann: *Handbuch der Musikgeschichte*, II².

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

the interweaving of individual melodic sections, dove-tail fashion, thus:



and this in turn brought, with Mozart, the coöperation of *groups of instruments* in such dove-tail formations, and led finally to the more sophisticated disposition of instrumental color, as in the second theme of the great G minor symphony:




This sort of figure has nothing in common with the old polyphony, in which there is always one predominating theme, shifting from one voice to another. The equal and independent participation of several differently colored voices in the polyphonic web is the characteristic feature of modern orchestral polyphony, the style of Beethoven and his successors down to Strauss.

To Mozart Dr. Riemann gives the credit for the first impulses to this free disposition of orchestral parts. It is evident, however, only in his last works, and notably the three great symphonies—the mighty ‘Jupiter’ (in C) with the great double fugue in the last movement, the radiantly cheerful E-flat, and the more deeply shaded, romantic G-minor, ‘the greatest orchestral composition of the eighteenth century,’ works which alone would have assured their creator’s immortality. It would be futile to attempt a description of these monumental creations, but we cannot forego a few general remarks about them. They preach the gospel of classicism in its highest perfection. Beauty of design was

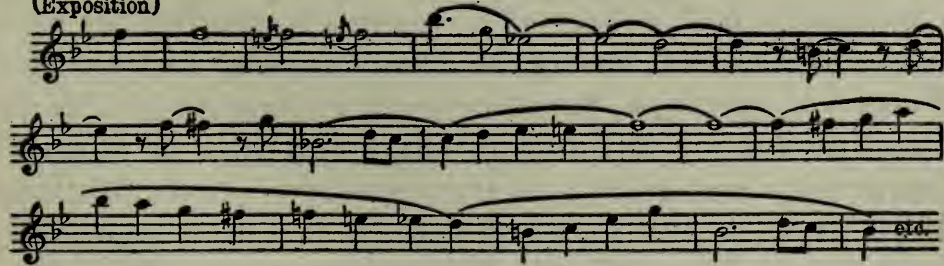
THE PERFECTION OF ORCHESTRAL STYLE

never more potent in art. It is Praxitelean purity of form warmed with delicate yet rich color. The expositions are as perfect in form as they are rich in content; the developments a world of iridescent color, of playful suggestions and sweet reminders. The clean-cut individuality of his themes, as eloquent as Wagner's leit-motifs, so lend themselves to transmutation that a single motive of three notes, revealed in a thousand new aspects, suffices as thematic material for an entire development section. We refer to the opening theme

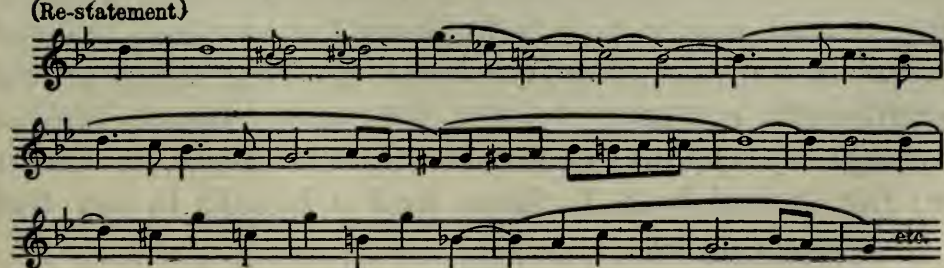
of the G minor: . A fascinating character displayed in every conceivable circumstance and situation would be the literary equivalent of this. But often the characters are two or three, and sometimes strange faces appear and complicate the story.

Mozart is the master of subtle variants, of unexpected yet not unnatural turns in melody. His recapitulations therefore are rarely literal. The essence remains the same, but it is deliciously intensified by almost imperceptible means. Compare the second theme of the last movement of the G minor in its original form with its metamorphosis:

(Exposition)



(Re-statement)



A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

What infinite variety there is within the limits of these three symphonies! The allegros, now majestic, noble; now rhythmically alert, scintillant, joyous; now full of suggestions of destiny; the andantes sometimes grave or sad, sometimes a caressing supplication followed by radiant bliss; the finales triumphant or careless, a furious presto or a mighty fugue—it is a riot of beauty and a maze of delicate dreams. But nowhere is Mozart more himself than in his minuets. The minuet was his cradle song. The first one he wrote—at four—would have set the feet of gay salons to dancing, but later they took real meaning, became alive with more than rhythm. Whether they go carelessly romping through flowery fields, full of the effervescence of youth, as in the Jupiter symphony, whether they sway languidly in sensuous rhythms or race ahead in fretful flight, with themes flitting in and out in breathless pursuit, they are always irresistible. And what balmy consolation, what sweet reassurance there lies in his ‘trios.’ Haydn gave life to the minuet; Mozart gave it beauty.

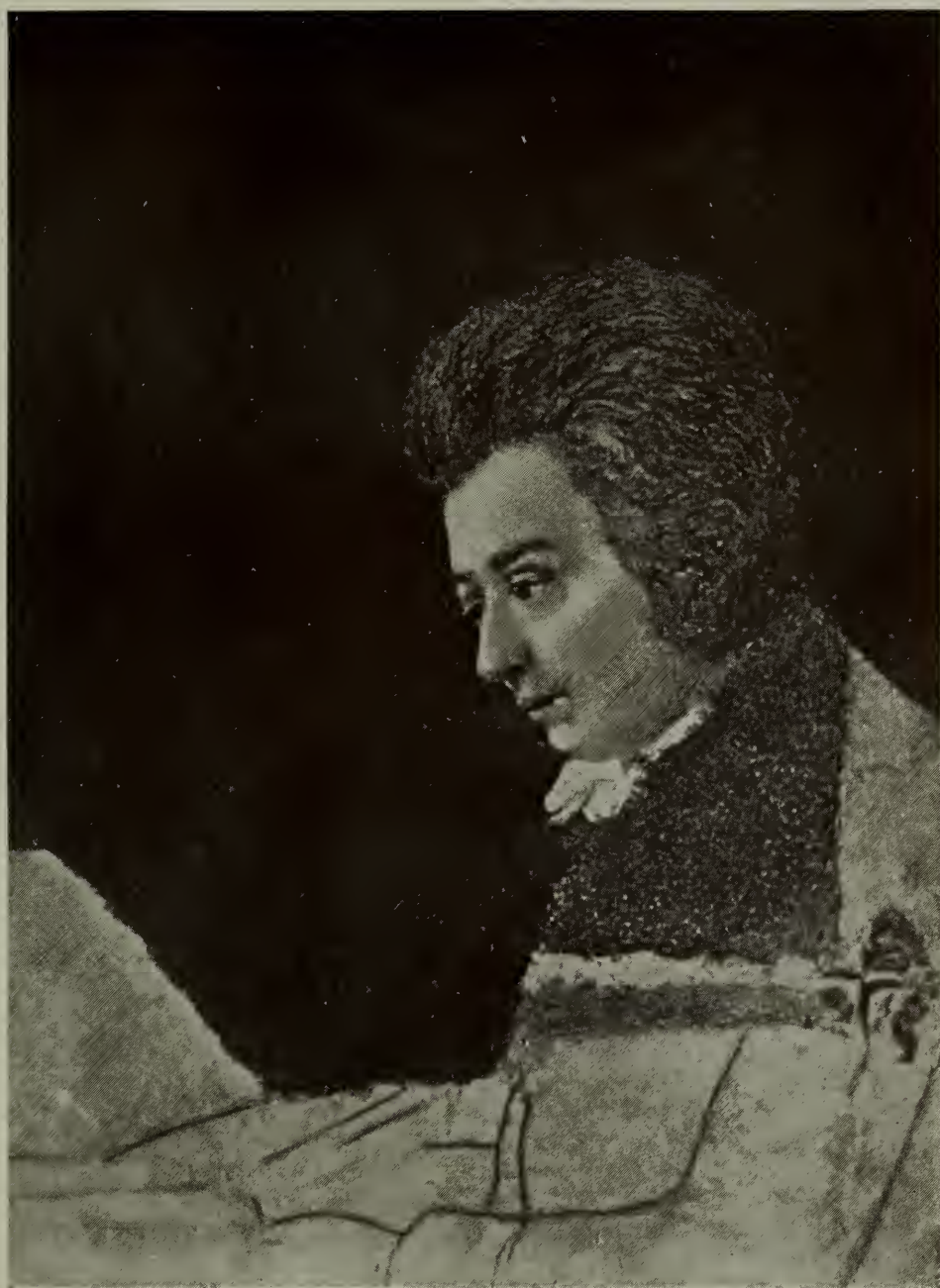
The outstanding feature, however, not only of Mozart’s symphonies, but of all his instrumental music, is its peculiarly melodic quality, the constant sensuous grace of melody regardless of rhythm or speed. Other composers had achieved a cantabile quality in slow movements, but rarely in the allegros and prestos. Pergolesi, perhaps, came nearest to Mozart in this respect and there is no doubt that that side of Mozart’s inspiration was rooted in the vocal style of the Italians. Here, then, is the point of contact between symphony and opera. Mozart is the ‘conclusion, the final result of the strong influence which operatic song had exerted upon instrumental music since the beginning of the eighteenth century.’* On the other hand, Mozart brought symphonic elements into the opera, in which, so far, it had been lacking; and it is safe to say that

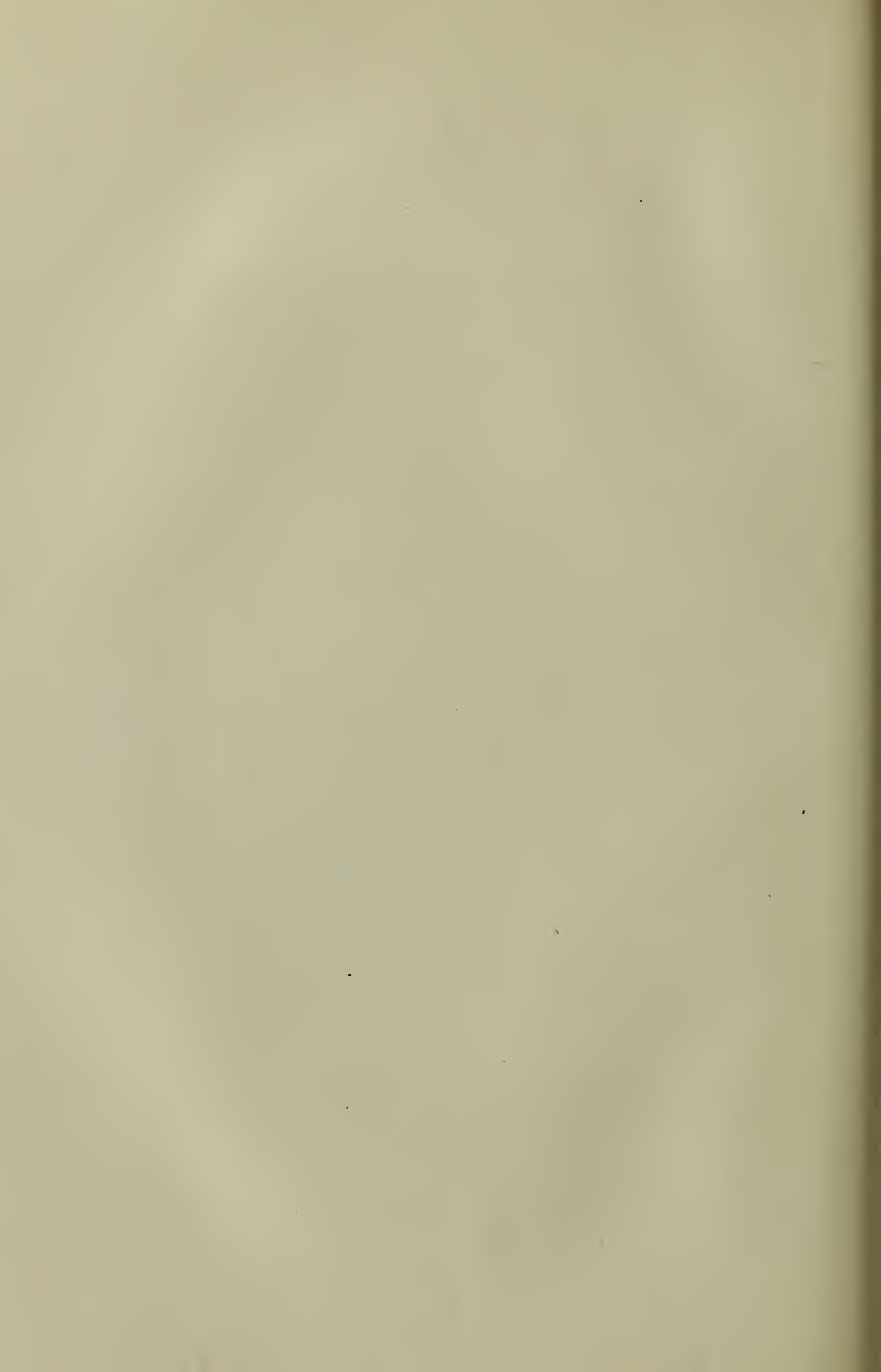
* Riemann: *Op. cit.*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

After an unfinished portrait by Josef Lange

After an inspection, however, of these things
Wittgenstein / Wittgenstein / Wittgenstein





MOZART'S OPERAS

only an 'instrumental' composer could have accomplished what Mozart accomplished in dramatic music.

VI

Great as were Mozart's achievements in the field of symphonic music, his services to opera were at least as important. Recent critics, such as Kretzschmar,* are wont to exalt the dramatic side of his genius above any other. It is certain, at any rate, that his strongest predilection lay in that direction. Already, in 1764, his father writes from London how the eight-year-old composer 'has his head filled' with an idea to write a little opera for the young people of Salzburg to perform. After the return home his dramatic imagination makes him personify the parts of his counterpoint exercises as *Il signor d'alto*, *Il marchese tenore*, *Il duco basso*, etc. Time and again he utters 'his dearest wish' to write an opera. Once it is 'rather French than German, and rather Italian than French'; another time 'not a *buffa* but a *seria*.' Curious enough, neither in *seria* nor in the purely Italian style did he attain his highest level.

But his suggestions, and much of his inspiration, came from Italy. In serious opera, Hasse, Jommelli, Paisillo, Majo, Traetto, and even minor men served him for models, and, of course, his friend Christian Bach; and Mozart never rose above their level. Lacking the qualities of a reformer he followed the models as closely as he did in other fields, but here was a form that was not adequate to his genius—too worn out and lifeless. Gluck might have helped him, but he came too late. And so it happened that *Mitridate* (1770), *Ascanio in Albo* (a 'serenata,' 1771), *Il sogno di Scipione*

* Hermann Kretzschmar: *Mozart in der Geschichte der Oper* (Jahrbuch der Musikbibliothek Peters, 1905).

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

and *Lucio Silla* (1772), *Il rè pastore* (dramatic cantata, 1775), *Idomeneo* (1781), and even *La Clemenza di Tito*, written in his very last year, are as dead to-day as the worst of their contemporaries. But with *opera buffa* it was otherwise. Various influences came into play here: Piccini's *La buona figliuola* and (though we have no record of Mozart's hearing it) its glorious ancestor, Pergolesi's *Serva padrona*; the successes of the *opéra comique*, Duni, Monsigny, Grétry, even Rousseau—all these reëchoed in his imagination. And then the flexibility of the form—the thing was unlimited, capable of infinite expansion. What if it had become trite and silly—a Mozart could turn dross to gold, he could deepen a puddle into a well! This was his great achievement; what Gluck did for the *opera seria* he did for the *buffa*. He took it into realms beyond the ken of man, where its absurdities became golden dreams, its figures flesh and blood, its buffoonery divine abandon. The serious side of the story, too, became less and less parody and more and more reality, till in *Don Giovanni* we do not know where the point of gravity lies. He calls it a *dramma giocosa*, but the joke is all too real. Death, even of a profligate, has its sting.

But what a music, what a halo of sound Mozart has cast about it all. What are words of the text, after all, especially when we do not understand them? These melodies carry their own message, they *cannot* be sung without expression, they are expression themselves. Is there in all music a more soul-stirring beauty than that of *Deh vieni non tardar* (Figaro, Act II), or *In diesen teuren Hallen* (Magic Flute, Act II)? Or more delicious tenderness than Cherubino's *Non so più* and *Voi che sapete*, or Don Giovanni's serenade *Deh vieni alla finestra*; or more dashing gallantry than *Fin ch'an dal vino*? Were duets ever written with half the grace of *La ci darem la mano*, in *Don Giovanni*, or the letter

MOZART'S OPERAS

scene in *Figaro*? They are jewels that will continue to glow when opera itself is reduced to cinders.

The purely musical elements of opera are Mozart's chief concern. If he gives himself wholly to that without detriment to the drama, it is only by virtue of his own extraordinary power. Mozart could not, like Gluck, make himself 'forget that he was a musician,' and would not if he could; yet his scenes *live*, his characters are more real than Gluck's; all this despite 'set arias,' despite coloratura, despite everything that Gluck abolished. But in musical details he followed him; in the portrayal of mood, in painting backgrounds, and in the handling of the chorus. Gluck painted landscape, but Mozart drew portraits. In musical characterization his mastery is undisputed. Again we have no use for words; the musical accents, the contour of the phrase and its rhythm delineate the man more precisely than a sketcher's pencil. Here once more beauty is the first law, it sheds its evening glow over all. No mere frivolity here, no dissolute roisterers, no faithless wives—Don Giovanni, the gay cavalier, becomes a 'demon of divine daring,' the urchin Cherubino is made the incarnation of Youth, Spring, and Love; the Countess personifies the ideal of pure womanhood; Beaumarchais, in short, becomes Mozart.

La finta semplice (1768), *La finta giardiniera* (1775), and some fragmentary works are, like Mozart's *serious* operas, now forgotten, but *Così fan tutte* (1790), *Le nozze di Figaro* (1786), and *Don Giovanni* (1787) continue with unimpaired vitality as part of every respectable operatic répertoire. The same is true of his greatest German opera, *Die Zauberflöte*, and in a measure of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*. Germany owes a debt of undying gratitude to the composer of these, for they accomplished the long-fought-for victory over the Italians. Hiller and his singspiel colleagues had tried it and failed; and so had Dittersdorf, the mediocre

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

Schweitzer (allied to Wieland the poet), and numerous others. Now for the first time tables were turned and Italy submitted to the influence of Germany. Mozart had beaten them on their own ground and had the audacity to appropriate the spoil for his own country. Without Mozart we could have no *Meistersinger*, cries Kretzschmar, which means no *Freischütz*, no *Oberon*, and no *Rosenkavalier*! But only we of to-day can know these things. Joseph II, who had 'ordered' the *Entführung* and whose express command was necessary to bring it upon the boards, opined on the night of the première that it was 'too beautiful for our ears, and a powerful lot of notes, my dear Mozart.' 'Exactly as many as are necessary, your majesty,' retorted the composer. It was an evening of triumph, but a triumph soon forgotten; for, after a few more attempts, the lights went down on German opera—the 'national vaudeville'—and Salieri and his crew returned with all the wailing heroines, the strutting heroes, the gruesome ghosts, and all the paraphernalia of 'serious opera!'

However, the people, the 'common people,' liked Punch and Judy better, or, at least, its equivalent. 'Magic' opera was the vogue, the absurder the better; and Schikaneder was their man. Some eighteenth century 'Chantecler' had left a surplus of bird feathers on his hands—and these suggested Papageno, the 'hero' of another 'magic' opera—'The Magic Flute.' The foolishness of its plot is unbelievable, but Mozart was won over. *Magic* opera! Why—any opera would do. Now we know how he loved it! And now he used his *own* magic, his wonderful strains, and lo, nonsense became logic, the 'silly mixture of fairy romance and free-masonic mysticism' was buried under a flood of sound; Schikaneder is forgotten and Mozart stands forth in all the radiance of his glory. Let the unscrupulous manager make his fortune and catch the people's plaudits—but think of the unspeakable joy of Mozart on his

THE REQUIEM

deathbed as every night he follows the performances in his imagination, act by act, piece by piece, hearing with a finer sense than human ear and dreaming of generations to come that will call him master!

The *Requiem*, which Mozart composed for the most part while *Zauberflöte* was 'running,' is the only ecclesiastical work which does not follow in the rut of his contemporaries. All his masses, offertories, oratorios, etc., are 'unscrupulous adaptations of the operatic style to church music.' The *Requiem*, completed by his pupil, Süßmayr, according to the master's direction, shows all the attributes of his genius—'deeply felt melody, masterful development, and a breadth of conception which betrays the influence of Handel.' 'But,' concludes Riemann, 'a soft, radiant glow spreading over it all reminds us of Pergolesi.' Yes, and that influence is felt in many a measure of this work—we should be tempted to use a trite metaphor if Pergolesi's mantle were adequate for the stature of a Mozart. As perhaps the finest example, in smaller form, of his church music we may refer the reader to the celebrated *Ave verum*, composed in 1791, which is reprinted in our musical supplement.

* * * / * *

Through Haydn and Mozart orchestral music emerged strong and well defined from a long period of dim growth. Their symphonies are, so to speak, the point of confluence of many streams of musical development, most of which, it may be remarked, had their source in Italy. The cultivation of solo melody, the development of harmony, largely by practice with the figured bass, until it became part of the structure of music, the perfection of the string instruments of the viol type and of the technique in playing and writing for them, the attempts to vivify operatic music by the use of various *timbres*, all these contributed to the establishment of orchestral music as an independent

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

branch of the art. The question of form had been first solved in music for keyboard instruments or for small groups of instruments and was merely adapted to the orchestra. These lines of development we have traced in previous chapters. The building up of the frame, so to speak, of orchestral music was synthetical. It had to await the perfection of the various materials which were combined to make it. This was, as we have said, a long, slow process. The symphony was evolved, not created. So, in this respect, neither Haydn nor Mozart are creators.

But once the various constituents had fallen into place, the perfected combination made clear, new and peculiar possibilities, to the cultivation of which Haydn and Mozart contributed enormously. These peculiar possibilities were in the direction of sonority and tone color. In search of these Haydn and Mozart originated the *orchestral* style and pointed the way for all subsequent composers. In the Haydn symphonies orchestral music first rang even and clear; in those of Mozart it was first tinged with tone colors, so exquisite, indeed, that to-day, beside the brilliant works of Wagner and Strauss, the colors still glow unfaded.

If Haydn and Mozart did not create the symphony, the excellence of their music standardized it. The blemish of conventionality and empty formalism cannot touch the excellence of their best work. Such excellence would have no power to move us were it only skill. There is genuine emotional inspiration in most of the Salomon symphonies and in the three great symphonies of Mozart. In Haydn's music it is the simple emotion of folk songs; in Mozart's it is more veiled and mysterious, subtle and elusive. In neither is it stormy and assertive, as in Beethoven, but it is none the less clearly felt. That is why their works endure. That is the personal touch, the special gift of each to the art. Attempts to exalt Beethoven's greatness by contrasting

THE MISSION OF HAYDN AND MOZART

his music with theirs are, in the main, unjust and lead to false conclusions. Their clarity and graceful tenderness are not less intrinsically beautiful because Beethoven had the power of the storm. Moreover, the honest critic must admit that the first two symphonies of Beethoven fall short of the artistic beauty and the real greatness of the Mozart G minor or C major. Indeed, it is to be doubted if any orchestral music can be more beautiful than Mozart's little symphony in G minor, for that is perfect.

We find in them the fresh-morning Spring of symphonic music, when the sun is bright, the air still cool and clear, the sparkling dew still on the grass. After them a freshness has gone out of music, never to return. Never again shall we hear the husbandman whistle across the fields, nor the song of the happy youth of dreams stealing barefoot across the dewy grass.

C. S.

CHAPTER IV

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Form and formalism—Beethoven's life—His relations with his family, teachers, friends, and other contemporaries—His character—The man and the artist—Determining factors in his development—The three periods in his work and their characteristics—His place in the history of music.

THE most important contributions of the eighteenth century to the history of music—the establishment of harmony and the new tonalities, the technical growth of the various forms, especially of the sonata and the development of opera—have been treated in preceding chapters; and we now only glance at them momentarily in order to point out that they typify and illustrate two of the predominating forces of the century, the desire for form and the reaction against mere formality. The first is well illustrated in the history of the sonata, which, at the middle of the century, was comparatively unimportant as a form of composition and often without special significance in its musical ideas. By 1796 Mozart had lived and died, and the symphonic work of Haydn was done; with the result that the principles of design, so strongly characteristic of eighteenth century art, were in full operation in the realm of music; the sonata form, as illustrated in the quartet and symphony, was lifted to noble position among the types of pure music; and the orchestra was vastly improved.

The second of these forces, the reaction against formality and conservatism, is connected with one of the most interesting phases of the history of art. For a large part of the century France held a dominating

FORM AND FORMALISM

place in drama, literature, and the opera. The art of the theatre and of letters had become merely a suave obedience to rule, and even the genius of a Voltaire, with his dramatic instinct and boldness, could not lift it entirely out of the frigid zone in which it had become fixed. Germany and England, however, were preparing to overthrow the traditions of French classicism. Popular interest in legends, folklore, and ballads revived. 'Ossian' (published 1760-63) and Percy's 'Reliques' (1765) aroused great enthusiasm both in England and on the continent. Before the end of the century Lessing, Goethe, and Schiller had placed new landmarks in the progress of literature in Germany; and in England, by 1810, much of Wordsworth's best poetry had been written. The study of early national history and an appreciation of Nature took the place of logic and the cold niceties of wit and epigram. The comfortable acquiescence in the existing state of things, the objectiveness, the decorous veiling of personal and subjective elements, which characterize so many eighteenth century writers, gave place to a passionate, lyrical outburst of rapture over nature, expression of personal desire, melancholy visions, or romantic love. In politics and social life there was a strong revival of republican ideas, a loosening of many of the more orthodox tenets of religion, and again a strong note of individualism.

That this counter-current against conventionality and mere formalism should find expression in music was but natural. The new development, however, in so far as pure instrumental music is concerned, was a change, not in form, but in content and style, an increase in richness and depth, which took place within the boundaries already laid out by earlier masters, especially Haydn and Mozart. The musician in whom we are to trace these developments is, of course, Ludwig van Beethoven, who stands, like a colossus, bridg-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

ing the gulf between eighteenth century classicism and nineteenth century romanticism. He was in a profound sense the child of his age and nation. He summed up the wisdom of the older contrapuntists, as well as that of Mozart and Haydn; and he also gave the impulse to what is most modern in musical achievement.

‘The most powerful currents in nineteenth century music (the romanticism of Liszt, Berlioz; the Wagnerian music drama) to a large extent take their point of departure from Beethoven,’ writes Dickinson; and the same author goes on to say: ‘No one disputes his preëminence as sonata and symphony writer. In these two departments he completes the movements of the eighteenth century in the development of the cyclical homophonic form, and is the first and greatest exponent of that principle of individualism which has given the later instrumental music its special character. He must always be studied in the light of this double significance.’*

I

Although born in Germany and of German parents, Beethoven belonged partly to that nation whose work forms so large a chapter in the history of music, the Netherlands. His paternal grandfather, Louis van Beethoven, early in the century emigrated from Antwerp to Bonn, taking a position first as bass singer then as chapel master in the court band of the Elector of Cologne. He was an unusually capable man, highly esteemed as a musician, and, although he died when Ludwig was but three years of age, left an indelible impression on his character. The father, Johann or Jean, also a singer in the court chapel, was lacking in the excellent qualities of the elder Beethoven. The

* Edward Dickinson: ‘The Study of the History of Music.’

BEETHOVEN'S LIFE

mother was of humble family, a woman with soft manners and frail health, who bore her many sorrows with quiet stoicism. Ludwig, the composer, christened in the Roman Catholic Church in Bonn, December 17, 1770, was the second of a family of seven, only three of whom lived to maturity. The house of his birth is in the Bonngasse, now marked with a memorial tablet.

At a very early age the father put little Ludwig at his music, and, upon perceiving his ability, kept him practising in spite of tears. Violin and piano were studied at home, while the rudiments of education were followed in a public school until the lad was about thirteen. As early as the age of nine, however, he had learned all his father could teach him and was turned over, first to a tenor singer named Pfeiffer and later to the court organist, van den Eeden, a friend of the grandfather. In 1781 Christian Gottlieb Neefe (1748-1798) succeeded van den Eeden and took Beethoven as his pupil. It is said that during an absence he left his scholar, who had now reached the age of eleven and a half years, to take his place at the organ, and that a few months later this same pupil was playing the larger part of Bach's *Wohltemperiertes Klavier*. There seems to be abundant evidence, indeed, that not only Neefe but others were convinced of the boy's genius and disposed to assist him. At the age of fifteen he was studying the violin with Franz Ries, the father of Ferdinand, and at seventeen he made his first journey to Vienna, where he had the famous interview with Mozart. His return to Bonn was hastened by the illness of his mother, who died shortly after.

Domestic affairs with the Beethovens went from bad to worse, what with poverty, the loss of the mother, and the irregular habits of the father. At nineteen Ludwig was virtually in the position of head of the family, earning money, dictating the expenditures, and looking after the education of the younger brothers. At this

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

time he was assistant court organist and viola player, both in the opera and chapel, and associated with such men as Ries, the two Rombergs, Simrock, and Stumpff. In July, 1792, when Haydn passed through Bonn on his return from the first London visit, Beethoven showed him a composition and was warmly praised; and, in the course of this very year, the Elector arranged for him to go again to Vienna, this time for a longer stay and for the purpose of further study.

His life thenceforth was in Vienna, varied only by visits to nearby villages or country places. His first public appearance in Vienna as pianist was in 1795, and from that time on his life was one of successful musical activity. As improviser at the pianoforte he was especially gifted, even at a time when there were marvellous feats in extempore playing. By the year 1798 there appeared symptoms of deafness, which gradually increased in spite of the efforts of physicians to arrest or cure it, and finally forced him to give up his playing. His last appearance in public as actual participant in concerted work took place in 1814, when he played his trio in B flat, though he conducted the orchestra until 1822. At last this activity was also denied him; and when the Choral Symphony was first performed, in 1824, he was totally unaware of the applause of the audience until he turned and saw it.

During these years, however, Beethoven had established himself in favor with the musical public with an independence such as no musician up to that time ever achieved. From 1800 on he was in receipt of a small annuity from Prince Lichnowsky, which was increased by the sale of many compositions. In 1809 Jerome Bonaparte, king of Westphalia, appears to have offered him the post of master of the chapel at Cassel, with a salary of \$1,500 a year and very easy duties. The prospect of losing Beethoven, however, aroused the lovers of music in Vienna to such an extent

BEETHOVEN'S LIFE

that three of the nobility—Princes Kinsky and Lobkowitz and Archduke Rudolph, brother of the emperor—guaranteed him a regular stipend in order to insure his continued residence among them. This maintenance, moreover, was given absolutely free from conditions of any sort. In 1815 his brother Caspar Carl died, charging the composer with the care of his son Carl, then a lad about nine years of age. The responsibility was assumed by Beethoven with fervor and enthusiasm, though the boy, as it proved, was far from being worthy of the affectionate care of his distinguished uncle. Moreover, Beethoven was now constantly in ill health, and often in trouble over lodgings, servants, and the like.

In spite of these preoccupations the composition of masterpieces went on, though undoubtedly with difficulty and pain, since their author was robbed of that peace of mind so necessary to health and great achievements. The nephew kept his hold on his uncle's affection to the end, was made heir to his property, and at the last commended to the care of Beethoven's old advocate, Dr. Bach. In November, 1826, the master, while making a journey from his brother's house at Gneixendorf, took cold and arrived at his home in Vienna, the Swarzspanierhaus, mortally ill with inflammation of the stomach and dropsy. The disease abated for a time and Beethoven, though still confined to his bed, was again eager for work. In March of the following year, however, he grew steadily worse, received the sacraments of the Roman Church on the twenty-fourth, and two days later, at evening during a tremendous thunder storm, he breathed his last. Stephan von Breuning and Anton Schindler, who had attended him, had gone to the cemetery to choose a burial place, and only Anselm Hüttenbrenner, the friend of both Schubert and Beethoven, was by his side. His funeral, March twenty-ninth, was attended by an immense con-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

course of people, including all the musicians and many of the nobility of Vienna. In the procession to the church the coffin was borne by eight distinguished members of the opera; thirty-two musicians carried torches, and at the gate of the cemetery there was an address from the pen of the most distinguished Austrian writer of the time, Grillparzer, recited by the actor Anschütz. The grave was on the south side of the cemetery near the spot where, a little more than a year later, Schubert was buried. In 1863 the bodies of both Schubert and Beethoven were exhumed and reburied after the tombs were put in repair, the work being carried out by *Die Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* of Vienna.

Such is the bare outline of a life filled with passionate earnestness and continuous striving after unattainable ideals of happiness. Beethoven's character was a strange combination of forces, and is not to be gauged by the measuring rod of the average man. Some writers have made too much of the accidents of his disposition, such as his violent temper and rough manners; and others have apparently been most concerned with his affairs of the heart. What really matters in connection with any biography has been noted by the great countryman and contemporary of Beethoven, Goethe: 'To present the man in relation to his times, and to show how far as a whole they are opposed to him, in how far they are favorable to him, and how, if he be an artist, poet, or writer, he reflects them outwardly.' *

It is the purpose of this chapter to present a few of the more salient qualities of this great man, as they have appeared to those contemporaneous and later writers best fitted to understand him; and to indicate the path by which he was led to his achievements in music. More than this is impossible within the limitations of the present volume, but it is the writer's hope

* *Dichtung und Wahrheit.*

BEETHOVEN'S FAMILY

that this chapter may serve at least as an introduction to one or more of the excellent longer works—biographies, volumes of criticism, editions of letters—which set forth more in detail the character of the man and artist.

II

In relation to the members of his family it cannot be said that Beethoven's life was happy or even comfortable. Two amiable and gentle figures emerge from the domestic group, the fine old grandfather, Louis, and the mother. For these Beethoven cherished till his death a tender and reverent memory. In the autumn of 1787 he writes to the Councillor, Dr. von Schaden, at Augsburg, with whom he had become acquainted on his return journey from Vienna: 'I found my mother still alive, but in the worst possible state; she was dying of consumption, and the end came about seven weeks ago, after she had endured much pain and suffering. She was to me such a good, lovable mother, my best friend. Oh! who was happier than I when I could still utter the sweet name of mother, and heed was paid to it.' The gentle soul suffered much, not only in her last illness, but throughout her married life, for her husband, the tenor singer, was a drunkard and worse than a nonentity in the family life. He died soon after the composer's removal to Vienna. The two brothers contributed little to his happiness or welfare. Johann was selfish and narrow-minded, penurious and mean, with a dash of egotistic arrogance which had nothing in common with the fierce pride of the older brother, Ludwig. Acquiring some property and living on it, Johann was capable of leaving at his brother's house his card inscribed *Johann van Beethoven, Gutsbesitzer* (land proprietor). This was promptly returned by the composer who had en-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

dorsed it with the counter inscription, *L. van Beethoven, Hirnbesitzer* (brain proprietor). The brother Caspar Carl was a less positive character, and seems to have shown some loyalty and affection for Ludwig at certain periods of his life, sometimes acting virtually as his secretary and business manager. But, though he was more tolerable to Ludwig than the *Gutsbesitzer*, his character was anything but admirable. Both brothers borrowed freely of the composer when he was affluent and neglected him when he most needed attention. 'Heaven keep me from having to receive favors from my brothers!' he writes. And in the 'Heiligenstadt Will,' written in 1802, before his fame as a composer was firmly established, his bitterness against them overflows. 'O ye men who regard or declare me to be malignant, stubborn, or cynical, how unjust are ye towards me. . . . What you have done against me has, as you know, long been forgiven. And you, brother Carl, I especially thank you for the attachment you have shown toward me of late . . . I should much like one of you to keep as an heirloom the instruments given to me by Prince L., but let no strife arise between you concerning them; if money should be of more service to you, just sell them.' This passage throws light on the characters of the brothers, as well as on Beethoven himself. It was at the house of the brother Johann, where the composer and his nephew Carl were visiting in 1826, near the end of his life, that he received such scant courtesy in respect to fires, attendance and the like (being also asked to pay board) that he was forced to return to his home in Vienna. The use of the family carriage was denied him and he was therefore compelled to ride in an open carriage to the nearest post station—an exposure which resulted in his fatal illness.

Young Carl, who became the precious charge of the composer upon Caspar's death, was intolerable. Beet-

BEETHOVEN'S TEACHERS

hoven sought, with an almost desperate courage, to bring the boy into paths of manhood and virtue, making plans for his schooling, for his proper acquaintance, and for his advancement. Carl was deaf, apparently, to all accents of affection and devotion, as well as to the occasional outbursts of fury from his uncle. He perpetually harassed him by his looseness, frivolity, continual demands for money, and lack of sensibility; and finally he attempted to take his own life. This last stroke was almost too much for the uncle, who gave way to his grief. Beethoven was, doubtless, but poorly adapted to the task of schoolmaster or disciplinarian; but he was generous, forgiving to a fault, and devoted to the ideal of duty which he conceived to be his. But the charge was from the beginning a constant source of anxiety and sorrow, altering his nature, causing trouble with his friends, and embittering his existence by constant disappointments and contentions.

Some uncertainties exist concerning Beethoven's relations with his teachers. The court organist, van den Eeden, was an old man, and could scarcely have taught the boy more than a year before he was handed over to Neefe, who was a good musician, a composer, and a writer on musical matters. He undoubtedly gave his pupil a thoroughly honest grounding in essentials, and, what was of even greater importance, he showed a confidence in the boy's powers that must have left a strong impression upon his sensitive nature. 'This young genius,' he writes, when Beethoven was about twelve years old, 'deserves some assistance that he may travel. If he goes on as he has begun, he will certainly become a second Mozart.' During Neefe's tutelage Beethoven was appointed accompanist to the opera band—an office which involved a good deal of responsibility and no pay—and later assistant court organist. His compositions, however, even up to the time of his departure for Vienna, do not at all compare, either in

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

number or significance, with those belonging to the first twenty-two years of Mozart's life. This fact, however, did not dampen the confidence of the teacher, who seems to have exerted the strongest influence of an academic nature which ever came into the composer's life. Upon leaving Bonn, Beethoven expresses his obligation. 'Thank you,' he says, 'for the counsel you have so often given me in my progress in my divine art. Should I ever become a great man, you will certainly have assisted in it.' *

His relations with Haydn have been a fruitful source of discussion and explanation. On his second arrival in Vienna, 1792, Beethoven became Haydn's pupil. Feeling, however, that his progress was slow, and finding that errors in counterpoint had been overlooked in his exercises, he quietly placed himself under the instruction of Schenck, a composer well known in Beethoven's day. There was at the time no rupture with Haydn, and he did not actually withdraw from his tutorship until the older master's second visit to London, in 1794. Beethoven then took up work with Albrechtsberger, but the relationship was mutually unsatisfactory. The pupil felt a lack of sympathy and Albrechtsberger expressed himself in regard to Beethoven with something like contempt. 'Have nothing to do with him,' he advises another pupil. 'He has learned nothing and will never do anything in decent style.' Although in later years Beethoven would not call himself a pupil of Haydn, yet there were many occasions when he showed a genuine and cordial appreciation for the chapel master of Esterházy. The natures of the two men, however, were fundamentally different, and could scarcely fail to be antagonistic. Haydn was by nature and court discipline schooled to habits of good temper and self-control; he was pious, submissive to the control of church and state, kindly

* Thayer, Vol. I, p. 227.

BEETHOVEN'S TEACHERS

and cheerful in disposition. Beethoven, on the contrary, was individualistic to the core, rough often to the point of rudeness in manner, deeply affected by the revolutionary spirit of the times, scornful of ritual and priest, melancholy and passionate in temperament. Is it strange that two such diverse natures found no common ground of meeting?

Beethoven, however, aside from his formal instruction, found nourishment for his genius, as all great men do, in the work of the masters of his own and other arts. He probably learned more from an independent study of Haydn's works than from all the stated lessons; for his early compositions begin precisely where those of Haydn and Mozart leave off. They show, also, that he knew the worth of the earlier masters. Concerning Emanuel Bach he writes: 'Of his pianoforte works I have only a few things, yet a few by that true artist serve not only for high enjoyment but also for study.' In 1803 he writes to his publishers, Breitkopf and Härtel: 'I thank you heartily for the beautiful things of Sebastian Bach. I will keep and study them.' Elsewhere he calls Sebastian Bach 'the forefather of harmony,' and in his characteristic vein said that his name should be Meer (Sea), instead of Bach (Brook). According to Wagner, this great master was Beethoven's guide in his artistic self-development.

The only other art with which he had any acquaintance was poetry, and for this he shows a lifelong and steadily growing appreciation. In the home circle of his early friends, the Breunings, he first learned something of German and English literature. Shakespeare was familiar to him, and he had a great admiration for Ossian, just then very popular in Germany. Homer and Plutarch he knew, though only in translation. In 1809 we find him ordering complete sets of Goethe and Schiller, and in a letter to Bettina Brentano he says:

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

'When you write to Goethe about me, select all words which will express to him my inmost reverence and admiration.' At the time of his interest in his physician's daughter, Therese Malfatti, he sends her as a gift Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* and Schlegel's translation of Shakespeare, and speaks to her of reading Tacitus. Elsewhere he writes: 'I have always tried from childhood onward to grasp the meaning of the better and the wise of every age. It is a disgrace for any artist who does not think it his duty at least to do that much.' These instances of deliberate selection show the strong tendency of his mind toward the powerful, epic, and 'grand' style of literature, and an almost complete indifference toward the light and ephemeral. His own language, as shown in the letters, show many minor inaccuracies, but is, nevertheless, strongly characteristic, forceful, and natural, and often trenchant or sardonic.

In his relation to his friends, happily his life shows many richer and more grateful experiences than with his own immediate family. Besides the Breunings, his first and perhaps most important friend was Count Waldstein, who recognized his genius and was undoubtedly of service to him in Bonn as well as in Vienna. In the album in which his friends inscribed their farewells upon his departure from Bonn Waldstein's entry is this: 'Dear Beethoven, you are traveling to Vienna in fulfillment of your long cherished wish. The genius of Mozart is still weeping and bewailing the death of her favorite. With the inexhaustible Haydn she found a refuge, but no occupation, and is now waiting to leave him and join herself to someone else. Labor assiduously and receive Mozart's spirit from the hands of Haydn. Your true friend, Waldstein. Bonn, October 29, 1792.' *

From the time of his arrival in Vienna, his biography is one long story of his connection with this or that

* Nottelbohm: *Beethoveniana*, XXVII.

BEETHOVEN'S FRIENDS

group of charming and fashionable people. Vienna was then in a very special sense the musical centre of Europe. There Mozart had just ended his marvellous career, and there was the home of Haydn, the most distinguished living musician. Many worthy representatives of the art of music—Salieri, Gyrowetz, Eybler, Weigl, Hummel, Woelffl, Steibelt, Ries—as well as a host of fashionable and titled people who possessed knowledge and a sincere love of music, called Vienna their home. Many people of rank and fashion were pleased to count themselves among Beethoven's friends. 'My art wins for me friends and esteem,' he writes, and from these friends he received hospitality, money, and countless favors. To them, in return, he dedicated one after another of his noble works. To Count Waldstein was inscribed the pianoforte sonata in C, opus 53; to Baron von Zmeskall the quartet in F minor, opus 95; to Countess Giulia Guicciardi the *Sonata quasi una fantasia* in C sharp minor (often called the Moonlight Sonata); the second symphony to Prince Carl Lobkowitz, and so on through the long, illustrious tale. He enjoyed the society of the polite world. 'It is good,' he says, 'to be with the aristocracy, but one must be able to impress them.'

The old order of princely patronage, however, under which nearly all musicians lived up to the close of the eighteenth century, had no part nor lot in Beethoven's career. Haydn, living until 1809, spent nearly all his life as a paid employee in the service of the prince of Esterházy, and even his London symphonies and the famous Austrian Hymn were composed 'to order.' Mozart, whose career began later and ended earlier than Haydn's, had the hardihood to throw off his yoke of servitude to the archbishop of Salzburg; but Beethoven was never under such a yoke. He accepted no conditions as to the time or character of his compositions; and, although he received a maintenance from

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

some of his princely friends, he was never on the footing of a paid servant. On the contrary, he mingled with nobility on a basis of perfect equality and shows no trace of humiliation or submission. He was furiously proud, and would accept nothing save on his own terms. Nine years before his death he welcomed joyfully a commission from the London Philharmonic Society to visit England and bring with him a symphony (it would have been the Ninth). Upon receiving an intimation, however, that the Philharmonic would be pleased to have something written in his earlier style, he indignantly rejected the whole proposition. For him there was no turning back and his art was too sacred to be subject to the lighter preferences of a chance patron. Though the plan to go to England was again raised shortly before his last illness (this time by the composer himself) it never came to a realization.

A special place among his friends should be given to a few whose appreciation of the master was singularly disinterested and deep. First among these were the von Breunings, who encouraged his genius, bore with the peculiar awkwardness and uncouthness of his youth, and managed, for the most part, to escape his suspicion and anger. It was in their house at the age of sixteen or seventeen that he literally first discovered what personal friendship meant; and it was Stephen von Breuning and his son Gerhart who, with Schindler, waited on him during his final illness. No others are to be compared with the Breunings; but more than one showed a capacity for genuine and unselfish devotion. Nanette Streicher, the daughter of the piano manufacturer, Stein, was among these. Often in his letters Beethoven declares that he does not wish to trouble any one; and yet he complains to this amiable and capable woman about servants, dusters, spoons, scissors, neckties, stays, and blames the Austrian government, both

BEETHOVEN'S FRIENDS

for his bad servants and smoking chimneys. It is evident that she repeatedly helped him over his difficulties, as did also Baron von Zmeskall, court secretary and distinguished violoncellist, to whom he applied numberless times for such things as quills, a looking glass, and the exchanging of a torn hat, and whom he sent about like an errand boy. Schuppanzigh, the celebrated violinist and founder of the Rasoumowsky quartet, which produced for the first time many of the Beethoven compositions, was a trustworthy and valuable friend. Princes Lichnowsky and Lobkowitz, Count von Brunswick, the Archbishop Rudolph, Countesses Ertmann, Erdödy, Therese von Brunswick, and Bettina Brentano (afterward von Arnim)—the list of titled and fashionable friends is long and all of them seem to have borne with patience his eccentricities and delinquencies in a genuine appreciation of his fine character and genius. Among the few friends who proved faithful to the last, however, was a young musician, Anton Schindler, who for a time was Beethoven's housemate and devoted slave, and became his literary executor and biographer. Schindler has been the object of much detraction and censure, but both Grove and Thayer regard him as trustworthy, in character as well as in intelligence. He had much to bear from his adored master, who tired of him, treated him with violence and injustice, and finally banished him from his house. But when Beethoven returned to Vienna from the ill-fated visit to Johann in 1826, sick unto death, Schindler resumed his old position as house companion. Both Schindler and Baron von Zmeskall collected notes, memoranda, and letters which have been of great service to later biographers of the composer.

Beethoven's friendships were often marked by periods of storm, and many who were once proud to be in his favored circle afterward became weary of his eccentricities, or were led away to newer interests. It

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

was hard for him to understand some of the most obvious rules of social conduct, and impossible for him to control his tongue or temper. Close and well-trying friends, falling under his suspicion or arousing his anger, were in the morning forbidden his house, roundly denounced, and treated almost like felons; in the afternoon, with a return of calmness and reason, he would write to them remorseful letters, beg their forgiveness, and plead for a continuance of their affection. Often the remorse was out of all proportion to his crime. After a quarrel with Stephan von Breuning he sends his portrait with the following message: 'My dear, good Stephan—Let what for a time passed between us lie forever hidden behind this picture. I know it, I have broken *your heart*. The emotion which you must certainly have noticed in me was sufficient punishment for it. It was not a feeling of *malice* against you; no, for then I should be no longer worthy of your friendship. It was passion on your part and on mine—but mistrust of you arose in me. Men came between us who are not worthy either of you or of me . . . faithful, good, and noble Stephan. Forgive me if I did hurt your feelings; I was not less a sufferer myself through not having you near me during such a long period; then only did I really feel how dear to my heart you are and ever will be.' Too apologetic and remorseful, maybe; but still breathing a kind of stubborn pride under its genuine and sincere affection.

Although Goethe and Beethoven met at least once, they did not become friends. The poet was twenty-one years the elder, and was too much the gentleman of the world to like outward roughness and uncouth manners in his associates. He had, moreover, no sympathy with Beethoven's rather republican opinions. On the other hand, Beethoven had something of the peasant's intolerance for the courtier and fine gentleman. 'Court air,' he writes in 1812, 'suits Goethe more than becomes

BEETHOVEN'S ACQUAINTANCES

a poet. One cannot laugh much at the ridiculous things that virtuosi do, when poets, who ought to be looked upon as the principal teachers of the nation, forget everything else amidst this glitter.'

In spite of his deafness, rudeness, and eccentricity Beethoven seems to have had no small degree of fascination for women. He was continually in love, writing sincere and charming letters to his 'immortal Beloved,' and planning more than once, with almost pathetic tenderness, for marriage and a home. There is a genuine infatuation, an ardent young-lover-like exultation in courtship that lifts him for a time even out of his art and leaves him wholly a man—a man, however, whose passion was always stayed and ennobled by spiritual bonds. License and immorality had no attraction for him, even when all his hopes of marriage were frustrated. Talented and lovely women accepted his admiration—Magdalena Willman, the singer, Countess Giulia Guicciardi, Therese Malfatti, Countess von Brunswick, Bettina Brentano, the 'Sybil of romantic literature'—one after another received his addresses, possibly returned in a measure his love, and, presently, married someone else. Beethoven was undoubtedly deeply moved at these successive disappointments. 'Oh, God!' he writes, 'let me at last find her who is destined to be mine, and who shall strengthen me in virtue.' But, though he was destined never to be happy in this way, his thwarted love wrecked neither his art nor his happiness. He writes to Ries in 1812, in a tone almost of contentment and resignation: 'All kind messages to your wife, unfortunately I have none. I found one who will probably never be mine, nevertheless, I am not on that account a woman hater.' The truth is, music was in reality his only mistress, and his plans for a more practical domesticity were like clouds temporarily illumined by the sun of his own imagination, and predestined to be as fleeting.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

As has been noted, toward the end of his life most of the intimacies and associations with the fashionable circles of Vienna gradually ceased. During the early part of his last illness the brother Johann, a few musicians and an occasional stranger were among his visitors, and until December of the year 1826 the nephew made his home with Beethoven. But Johann returned to his property, Carl rejoined his regiment, much to the added comfort of the sick man, and the visits from outsiders grew fewer in number. The friends of earlier days—those whom he had honored by his dedications or who had profited by the production of his works, as well as those who had suffered from his violence and abuse—nearly all were either dead or unable to attend him in his failing strength. Only the Breunings and Schindler remained actively faithful till the last.

With his publishers his relations were, on the whole, of a calmer and more stable nature than with his princely friends. It must be noted that Beethoven is the first composer whose works were placed before the public in the manner which has now become universal. Although music printing had been practised since the sixteenth century, the publisher in the modern sense did not arrive until about Beethoven's time. The works of the eighteenth century composers were often produced from manuscript and kept in that state in the libraries of private houses, and whatever copies were made were generally at the express order of some musical patron. Neither Mozart nor Haydn had a 'publisher' in the modern sense—a man who purchases the author's work outright or on royalties, taking his own risk in printing and selling it. The greater part of Beethoven's compositions were sold outright to the distinguished house of Breitkopf and Härtel, and, all things considered, he was well paid. In those days it took a week for a letter to travel from Vienna to Leip-

BEETHOVEN AND THE PUBLISHERS

zig, and Beethoven's patience was often sorely tried by delays not due to tardiness of post. The correspondence is not lacking in those frantic calls for proof, questions about dates of publication, alarms over errors, and other matters so familiar to every composer and author. In earlier days, Simrock of Bonn undertook the publication of some of the master's work, but did not come up to his ideas in respect to time. The following letter, concerning the Sonata in A, opus 47, shows that even the impatient Beethoven could bear good-naturedly with a certain amount of irritating trouble:

'Dear, best Herr Simrock: I have been all the time waiting anxiously for my sonata which I gave you—but in vain. Do please write and tell me the reason of the delay—whether you have taken it from me merely to give it as food to the moths or do you wish to claim it by special imperial privilege? Well, I thought that might have happened long ago. This slow devil who was to beat out this sonata, where is he hiding? As a rule you are a quick devil, it is known that, like Faust, you are in league with the black one, and on that very account *so beloved* by your comrades.'

It is said that Nägeli of Zürich on receiving for publication the Sonata in G (opus 31, No. 1), undertook to improve a passage which he considered too abrupt or heterodox, and added four measures of his own. The liberty was discovered in proof, and the publication immediately transferred to Simrock, who produced a correct version. Nägeli, however, still retained and adhered to his own version, copies of which are still occasionally met with.

More than once Beethoven shows himself to be reasonable and even patient with troublesome conditions. In regard to some corrections in the C minor symphony he writes to Breitkopf and Härtel: 'One must not pretend to be so divine as not to make improvements here and there in one's creations'—and surely the following

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

is a mild protest, considering the cause: 'How in heaven's name did my Fantasia with orchestra come to be dedicated to the King of Bavaria?' This was no slip of memory on Beethoven's part, for he was very particular about dedications. Again he writes to his publishers, after citing a list of errors: 'Make as many faults as you like, leave out as much as you like—you are still highly esteemed by me; that is the way with men, they are esteemed because they have not made still greater faults.' His letters reveal the fact, not that he was disorderly and careless, but that, on the contrary, when he had time to give attention, he could manage his business affairs very sensibly indeed. Usually he is exact in stating his terms and conditions for any given piece of work; but occasionally he was also somewhat free in promising the same composition to more than one publisher, and in setting off one bid against another in order to get his price. But it is impossible to see, even in such acts, any very deep-seated selfish or mercenary quality. Full of ideas, pushed from within as well as from without, he knew himself capable of replacing one composition with another of even richer value. He was always in need of money, not because he lived luxuriously, but because of the many demands made upon him from his family and by reason of the fact that absorption in composition, frequent illness, and deafness rendered him incapable of ordering his affairs with any degree of economy. Whenever it was possible he gave his services generously for needy causes, such as a benefit for sick soldiers, or for the indigent daughter of Bach. Writing to Dr. Wegeler, the husband of Eleanore von Breuning, he says: 'If in our native land there are any signs of returning prosperity, I will only use my art for the benefit of the poor.'

In respect to other musicians Beethoven was in a state of more or less open warfare. Bitterly resent-

BEETHOVEN'S CHARACTER

ful of any slight, it was not easy for him to forgive even an innocent or kindly criticism, much less the open sneers that invariably attend the progress of a new and somewhat heretical genius. If, however, he considered other musicians worthy, he was glad of their recognition. Although he did not care for the subject of *Don Giovanni*, he writes that Mozart's success gave him as much pleasure as if it were his own work. To his publishers he addresses these wise words concerning young musicians: 'Advise your critics to exercise more care and good sense with regard to the productions of young authors, for many a one may become thereby dispirited, who otherwise might have risen to higher things.'

III

Perhaps the most obvious element of his character was his essential innocence and simplicity, with all the curious secondary traits that accompany a nature fundamentally incapable of becoming sophisticated. Love of nature was one part of it. To an exceptional degree he loved to walk in the woods and to make long sojourns in the country. Lying on his back in the fields, staring into the sky, he forgot himself and his anxieties in a kind of ecstatic delight. Klover, the painter, writes: 'He would stand still, as if listening, with a piece of paper in his hand, look up and down, and then write something.' Not always was he quiet, but often strode impatiently along, humming, singing, or roaring, with an occasional pause for the purpose of making notes. In this manner dozens of sketch books were filled with ideas which enable the student to trace, step by step, the evolution of his themes. An Englishman who lived in intimate friendship with him for some months asserts that he never met anyone who so delighted in nature, or so thoroughly enjoyed flowers,

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

clouds, or other natural subjects. Nature was almost meat and drink to him; he seems positively to exist upon it.' This quality is emphasized by Beethoven's letter to Therese Malfatti, in which he says: 'No man on earth can love the country as I do. It is trees, woods, and rocks that return to us the echo of our own thought.' Like the Greeks, he could turn the dancing of the Satyrs into an acceptable offering on the altar of art. Of this part of his nature, the Sixth (Pastoral) Symphony is the monument. It is as if he took special occasion, once for all, to let speak the immediate voice of Pan within him. It is full of the sights and sounds of nature, not, however, as Beethoven himself says, a painting, but an expression of feeling. In an analysis of the *allegro*, referring to the constant repetition of short phrases, Grove says: 'I believe that the delicious, natural, May-day, out-of-doors feeling of this movement arises in a great measure from this kind of repetition. It causes a monotony—which, however, is never monotonous—and which, though no *imitation*, is akin to the constant sounds of nature—the monotony of rustling leaves and swaying trees, and running brooks and blowing wind, the call of birds and the hum of insects.' And he adds, as a summing up of its beauty: 'However abstruse or characteristic the mood of Beethoven, the expression of his mind is never dry or repulsive. To hear one of his great compositions is like contemplating, not a work of art or man's device, but a mountain, a forest, or other immense product of nature—at once so complex and so simple; the whole so great and overpowering; the parts so minute, so lovely, and so consistent; and the effect so inspiring, so beneficial, and so elevating.'

Another phase of this deep, unworldly innocence was the very exhibition of temper that so often brought him into trouble. Sophistication and conformity remove these violences from men's conduct, and rightly

BEETHOVEN'S CHARACTER

so; often with them is also removed much of the earnestness, the spontaneous tenderness, and the trustfulness of innocence. What but a deeply innocent, unsophisticated mind could have dictated words like these, which were written to Dr. Wegeler, after a misunderstanding: 'My only consolation is that you knew me almost from my childhood, and—oh, let me say it myself—I was really always of good disposition, and in my dealings always strove to be upright and honest; how, otherwise, could you have loved me.' Together with this yearning for understanding from his friends was a consciousness also of genius, which was humble, the very opposite of vanity and self-conceit: 'You will only see me again when I am truly great; not only greater as an artist, but as a man you shall find me better, more perfect'; and again, 'I am convinced good fortune will not fail me; with whom need I be afraid of measuring my strength?' This is the language of self-confidence, and also of a nature thoroughly innocent and simple.

Still another, and perhaps the most remarkable, phase of his character was a certain boisterous love of fun and high spirits, which betrayed itself on the most unexpected occasions, often in puns, jests, practical jokes, and satiric comment. He was, in fact, an invincible humorist, ready, in season or out of season, with or without decorum, to expend his jocose or facetious pleasantry upon friend or enemy. If he could deliver a home thrust, it was often accompanied with a roar of laughter, and his sense of a joke often overthrew every other consideration. Throwing books, plates, eggs, at the servants, pouring a dish of stew over the head of the waiter who had served him improperly; sending the wisp of goat's hair to the lady who had asked him for a lock of his own—these were his sardonically jesting retorts to what he considered to be clumsiness or sentimentality. The estimable

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

Schuppanzigh, who in later life grew very fat, was the subject of many a joke. 'My lord Falstaff' was one of his nicknames, and a piece of musical drollery exists, scrawled by Beethoven on a blank page of the end of his sonata, opus 28, entitled *Lob an den Dicken* (Praise to the fat one), which consists of a sort of canon to the words, *Schuppanzigh ist ein Lump, Lump, Lump*, and so on. Beethoven writes to Count von Brunswick: 'Schuppanzigh is married—they say his wife is as fat as himself—what a family!' Nicknames are invented for friend and foe: Johann, the *Gutsbesitzer*, is the 'Brain-eater' or 'Pseudo-brother'; his brother's widow is 'Queen of the Night,' and a canon written to Count Moritz Lichnowsky is set to the words, *Bester Herr Graf, du bist ein Schaf!* Often his humor is in bad taste and frequently out of season, but it is always on call, a boisterous, biting, shrewd eighteenth century gift for ridicule and jest.

It must be admitted, however, that he was usually blind to the jest when it was turned on himself. There is an anecdote to the effect that in Berlin in 1796 he interrupted Himmel, the pianist, in the midst of an improvisation, asking him when he was intending to begin in earnest. When, however, months afterward, Himmel attempted to even up the joke by writing to Beethoven about the invention of a lantern for the blind, the composer not only did not see the point but was enraged when it was pointed out to him. Often, however, the humorous turn which he was enabled to give must have assisted in averting difficult situations, and not always was his jesting so heavy handed. He speaks of sending a song to the Princess Kinsky, 'one of the stoutest, prettiest ladies in Vienna,' and the following note shows his keen understanding of the peculiarities of popular favorites. Anna Milder, a celebrated German singer, was needed for rehearsal. 'Manage the affair cleverly with Milder,' he writes; 'only tell

BEETHOVEN'S CHARACTER

her that you really come in my name, and in advance beg her not to sing anywhere else. But to-morrow I will come myself in order to kiss the hem of her garment.'

Another phase of the essential simplicity, as well as greatness, of his mind is in his direct grasp of the central thought of any work. He overlooked incidental elements, in order to get at the fundamental idea. This quality, as well as his own innate tendency toward the heroic and grand, led him to such writers as Homer, Plutarch, and Shakespeare, and made it impossible for him to find any interest in trivial or frivolous themes. He was always looking for suitable subjects for opera, but could never bring himself to regard seriously such a subject as Figaro or Don Giovanni. The less noble impulses were not, for him, worthy themes for art. 'He refused with horror,' Wagner notes, 'to write music to ballet, shows, fireworks, sensual love intrigues, or an opera text of a frivolous tendency.'

'Mozart, with his divine nonchalance, snatched at any earthly happiness, any gaiety of the flesh or spirit, and changed it instantly into the immortal substance of his music. But Beethoven, with his peasant seriousness, could not jest with virtue or the rhythmical order of the world. His art was his religion and must be served with a devotion in which there was none of the easy pleasantness of the world.' * This same ability of grasping the fundamental idea, however, led him also sometimes to set an undue valuation upon an inferior poet, such as Klopstock, whom it is said he read habitually for years. Something in the nobility and grandeur of the ideas at the bottom of this poet's work caused Beethoven to overlook its pompousness and chaotic quality. The words meant less for him than the emotion and conception which prompted them. Beethoven himself, however, says that Goethe spoiled

* Arthur Symons, Essay 'Beethoven.'

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

Klopstock for him, but it was only, fortunately, to provide him with something better. His taste for whatever was noble and grand in art never left him; and, so far as he was able, he lived up to the idea that it was the artist's duty to be acquainted with the ancient and modern poets, not only so as to choose the best poetry for his own work, but also to afford food for his inspiration.

Beethoven from the first faced the world with a defiant spirit and a sort of wild independence. His sordid childhood nourished in him a rugged habit of self-dependence, and the knowledge of his own powers was like a steady beacon holding him unfalteringly to a consciousness of his high destiny. He *believed*, with all the innocence of a great mind, that gifts of genius were more than sufficient to raise their possessor to a level with the highest nobility; and, with such a belief, he could not pretend to a humility he was far from feeling in the companionship of social superiors. This feeling was perfectly compatible with the genuine modesty and clearness of judgment in regard to his own work. 'Do not snatch the laurel wreaths from Handel, Haydn, and Mozart,' he writes; 'they are entitled to them; as yet I am not.' But his modesty in things artistic was born, after all, of a sense of his own kinship with the greatest of the masters of art. He could face a comparison with them, knowing full well he belonged to their court; but to courts of a more temporal nature he did not and could not belong, however often he chanced to come under a princely roof. The light ease of manner, the assured courtesies, the happy audacities of speech and conduct which are native to the life of the salon and court were foreign to his nature. The suffrage of the fashionable world of Vienna he won by reason of qualities which were alien to them, but yet touched their sympathies, satisfied their genuine love of music, and pricked their sensi-

BEETHOVEN'S CHARACTER

bilities as with a goad. His is perhaps the first historic instance of 'artistic temperament' dominating and imposing itself upon society. Byron to a certain extent defied social customs and allowed himself liberties which he expected to be excused on account of his genius and popularity; but he was fundamentally much more closely allied to the world of fashion than Beethoven, who was a law unto himself and in sympathy with society only so far as it understood and applauded his actions.

Theoretically, at least, he was an ardent revolutionist. During the last decades of the eighteenth century the revolution in France had dwarfed all other political events in Europe, and republicanism was in the air. Two years after Beethoven left Bonn the Electorate of Cologne was abolished, and during the succeeding period many other small principalities were swallowed up by the larger kingdoms. The old order was changed and almost all Europe was involved in warfare. In 1799 the allied European states began to make headway against the invading French armies, and, as a consequence, the Directory fell into disfavor in France. Confusion and disorder prevailed, the Royalists recovering somewhat of their former power, and the Jacobins threatening another Reign of Terror. In this desperate state of affairs Napoleon was looked to as the liberator of his country. How he returned in all haste from his victorious campaign in Egypt, was hailed with wild enthusiasm, joined forces with some of the Directors, drove the Council of Five Hundred from the Chamber of Deputies (1799) and became First Consul—in fact, master of France—need hardly be recounted here.

Beethoven regarded Napoleon as the embodiment of the new hopes for the freedom of mankind which had been fostered by the Revolution. That he had also been affected by the martial spirit of the times is

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

revealed in the first and second symphonies. It was the third, however, which was to prove the true monument to republicanism. The story is one of the familiar tales of musical history. Still full of confidence and faith in the Corsican hero, Beethoven composed his great 'Eroica' symphony (1804) and inscribed it with the name 'Buonaparte.' A fair copy had already been sent to an envoy who should present it to Napoleon, and another finished copy was lying on the composer's work table when Beethoven's friend Ries brought the news that Napoleon had assumed the title of emperor. Forthwith the admiration of Beethoven turned to hatred. 'After all, then,' he cried, 'he is nothing but an ordinary mortal! He will trample all the rights of man underfoot, to indulge his ambition, and become a greater tyrant than anyone!' The title page was seized, torn in half and thrown on the floor; and the symphony was rededicated to the memory of *un grand' uomo*. It is said that Beethoven was never heard to refer to the matter again until the death of Napoleon in 1821, when he remarked, in allusion to the Funeral March of his second movement, 'I have already foreseen and provided for that catastrophe.' Probably nothing, however, beyond the title page was altered. 'It is still a portrait—and we may believe a favorable portrait—of Napoleon, and should be listened to in that sense. Not as a conqueror—that would not attract Beethoven's admiration—but for the general grandeur and loftiness of his course and of his public character. How far the portraiture extends, whether to the first movement only or through the entire work, there will probably be always a difference of opinion. The first movement is certain. The March is certain also, as is shown by Beethoven's own remark—and the writer believes, after the best consideration he can give to the subject, that the other movements are also included in the picture,

THE MAN AND THE ARTIST

and that the *poco andante* at the end represents the apotheosis of the hero.' *

IV

It is in vain, however, that one looks for a parallel between the life and the work of the master. In everyday matters he was impatient, abrupt and often careless; while in his art his patience was such as to become even a slow brooding, an infinite care. His life was often distracted and melancholy; his music is never distracted or melancholy, except in so far as great art can be melancholy with a nobly tragic, universal depth of sadness. In political matters a revolutionist and in social life a rebel, in his art he accepted forms as he found them, expanding them, indeed, but not discarding them. Audacious and impassioned not only in private conduct but in his extempore playing, in his writing he was cautious and selective beyond all belief. The sketch books are a curious and interesting witness to the slow and tentative processes of his mind. More than fifty of these—books of coarse music paper of two hundred or more pages, sixteen staves to the page—were found among his effects after death and sold. One of these books was constantly with him, on his walks, by his bedside, or when travelling, and in them he wrote down his musical ideas as they came, rewrote and elaborated them until they reached the form he desired. They are, as Grove points out, perhaps the most remarkable relic that any artist or literary man has left behind him. In them can be traced the germs of his themes from crude or often trivial beginning, growing under his hand spontaneously, as it seemed, into the distinguished and artistic designs of his completed work. A dozen or a score attempts at the same theme can often be found, and 'the more

* Grove: 'Beethoven and His Nine Symphonies,' pp. 55-56.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

they are elaborated, the more spontaneous they become.' In these books it can also be seen how he often worked upon four or five different compositions at the same time; how he sometimes kept in mind a theme or an idea for years before finally using it, and how extraordinary was the fertility of his genius. Nottebohm, the author of 'Beethoveniana,' says: 'Had he carried out all the symphonies which are begun in these books, we should have at least fifty.' Thus we see his method of work, and the stages through which his compositions passed. 'He took a story out of his own life, the life of a friend, a play of Goethe or Shakespeare—and he labored, eternally altering and improving, until at last every phrase expressed just the emotions he himself felt. The exhibition of his themes, as expressed in the sketch books, show how passionately and patiently he worked.'

Although he certainly sometimes allowed his music to be affected by outside events, as has been traced, for example, in the *Eroica* Symphony, yet in most instances his work seems to be independent of the outward experiences of his life. One of the most striking examples of the detachment of his artistic from his everyday life is in connection with the Second Symphony, written in 1802, the year in which he wrote, also, the celebrated 'Heiligenstadt Will.' This document was prompted by his despair over his bad health, frequent unhappiness on account of his brothers, and his deafness, which was now pronounced incurable. In it he says:

'During the last six years I have been in a wretched condition—I am compelled to live as an exile. If I approach near to people, a feeling of hot anxiety comes over me lest my condition should be noticed. At times I was on the point of putting an end to my life—art alone restrained my hand. Oh, it seemed as if I could not quit this earth until I had produced all

THE MAN AND THE ARTIST

I felt within me, and so I continued this wretched life—wretched, indeed, with so sensitive a body that a somewhat sudden change can throw me from the best into the worst state. Lasting, I hope, will be my resolution to bear up until it pleases the inexorable Parcæ to break the thread. My prayer is that your life may be better, less troubled by cares, than mine. Recommend to your children *virtue*; it alone can bring happiness, not money. So let it be. I joyfully hasten to meet death. O Providence, let me have just one pure day of *joy*; so long is it since true joy filled my heart. Oh, when, Divine Being, shall I be able once again to feel it in the temple of Nature and of men.'

Such was his expression of grief at the time when the nature of his malady became known to him; and who can doubt its depth and sincerity? In it the man speaks from the heart; but in the same year also the Second Symphony was written, and in this the artist speaks. What a wonderful difference! 'The *scherzo* is as proudly gay in its capricious fantasy as the *andante* is completely happy and tranquil; for everything is smiling in this symphony, the warlike spirit of the *allegro* is entirely free from violence; one can only find there the grateful fervor of a noble heart in which are still preserved unblemished the loveliest illusions of life.' *

There seem to be two periods—one from 1808 to 1811, during his love affair with Therese Malfatti, and again after his brother's death in 1815—when outward circumstances prevailed against the artist and rendered him comparatively silent. Unable to loosen the grip of personal emotion, during these periods he wrote little of importance. 'During all the rest of his agitated and tormented life nothing, neither the constant series of passionate and brief loves, nor constant bodily sickness, trouble about money, trouble about

* Berlioz: *Étude critique des symphonies de Beethoven.*

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

friends, relations, and the unspeakable nephew, meant anything vital to his deeper self. The nephew helped to kill him, but could not color a note of his music.' * If, as in the case of the 'Eroica,' music was sometimes the reflection of present emotion, it was still oftener, as in the case just cited, his magic against it, his shelter from grief, the rock-wall with which he shut out the woes of life.

V

In the development of his artistic career three circumstances may be counted as strongly determining factors: his early experience in the theatre at Bonn, his skill on the pianoforte, and his lifelong preference for the sonata form.

In regard to the first, it is clearly evident that, although Beethoven was moved least of all by operatic works, yet his constant familiarity with the orchestra during the formative years of his life must have left a strong impression. From 1788 to 1792 at the National Theatre in Bonn he was playing in such works as *Die Entführung*, *Don Giovanni*, and *Figaro* by Mozart, *Die Pilgrime von Mekka* by Gluck, and productions by Sallieri, Benda, Dittersdorf, and Paesiello. That in after life he wrote but one opera was probably due to a number of causes, one of which was his difficulty in finding a libretto to his liking. His diary and letters show that he was frequently in correspondence with various poets concerning a libretto, and that the purpose of further operatic work was never dismissed from his mind. But he always conceived his melodies and musical ideas instrumentally rather than vocally, and never was able or willing to modify them to suit the compass of the average voice. One consequence of this was that he had endless trouble and difficulty in the produc-

* Arthur Symons, Essay 'Beethoven.'

FACTORS IN BEETHOVEN'S DEVELOPMENT

tion of his opera, *Fidelio*, which was withdrawn after the first three performances. Upon its revival it was played to larger and more appreciative audiences, but was again suddenly and finally withdrawn by the composer after a quarrel with Baron von Braun, the intendant of the theatre.

It was but natural that such difficulties and vexations should turn the attention of the composer away from operatic production, but he undoubtedly hoped that better fortune would sometime attend his endeavors. In one respect, at least, he reaped encouragement from the experience with *Fidelio*, for it helped him to overcome his sensitiveness in regard to his deafness. On the margin of his sketch book in 1805 he writes: 'Struggling as you are in the vortex of society, it is yet possible, notwithstanding all social hindrances, to write operas. Let your deafness be no longer a secret, even in your art.' Great as *Fidelio* is, it does not possess the vocal excellences even of the commonplace Italian or French opera of its day. Its merit lies in the greater nobility of conception, the freedom and boldness of its orchestral score, and in its passionate emotional depth. The result of Beethoven's early practice with the theatre, undoubtedly, was of far deeper significance in relation to his symphonies than to his operatic work.

During the early days in Vienna his reputation rested almost entirely upon his wonderful skill as player upon the pianoforte, or, more especially, as improviser. It was a period of great feats in extempore playing, and some of the greatest masters of the time—Himmel, Woelffl, Lipawsky, Gelinek, Steibelt—lived in Vienna. They were at first inclined to make sport of the newcomer, who bore himself awkwardly, spoke in dialect, and took unheard-of liberties in his playing; but they were presently forced to recognize the master hand. Steibelt challenged him at the piano and was thoroughly beaten, while Gelinek paid him the compliment

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

of listening to his playing so carefully as to be able to reproduce many of his harmonies and melodies and pass them off as his own. Technically, only Himmel and Woelffl could seriously compare with Beethoven, the first being distinguished by clearness and elegance, and the second by the possession of unusually large hands, which gave him a remarkable command of the keyboard. They, as well as Beethoven, could perform wonders in transposition, reading at sight, and memorizing, just as Mozart had done. But Beethoven's reputation as the 'giant among players' rested upon other qualities—the fire of his imagination, nobility of style, and great range of expression. Understanding as he did the capabilities of the pianoforte, he endowed his compositions for this instrument with a wealth of detail and depth of expression such as had hitherto not been achieved. Czerny, himself an excellent pianist, thus describes his playing: 'His improvisation was most brilliant and striking; in whatever company he might chance to be he knew how to produce such an effect upon every hearer that frequently not an eye remained dry, while many would break out in loud sobs; for there was something wonderful in his expression, in addition to the beauty and originality of his ideas, and his spirited style of rendering them.'* Ries and other artists have also borne testimony to his skill, wealth of imagery and inexhaustible fertility of ideas. Grove says: 'He extemporized in regular form; and his variations, when he treated a theme in that way, were not mere alterations of figure, but real developments and elaborations of the subject.'

In close connection with his work as pianist, and exercising a powerful influence not only upon Beethoven but also upon all later composers, was the mechanical development of the pianoforte. The clavichord and clavicembalo, which had occupied a modest place dur-

* Thayer: Vol. II, p. 10.

FACTORS IN BEETHOVEN'S DEVELOPMENT

ing the eighteenth century merely as accompanying instruments to string or wind music, were now gradually replaced by the *Hammer-clavier*, as it was called, which, by the middle of the century, began to be considered seriously as a solo instrument of remarkable powers. Important piano manufacturers, such as Silbermann in Strassburg, Späth in Regensburg, Stein in Augsburg, Broadwood in London, and Erard in Paris, did much to bring about the perfection of the instrument and so indirectly assisted in the development of pianoforte music. In 1747 Sebastian Bach had played a Silbermann piano before Frederick the Great in Potsdam, but the important development came after the middle of the century. In London, in 1768, Johann Christian Bach used the pianoforte for the first time in a public concert, and we know that Mozart possessed instruments both from Späth and Stein, and that in 1779 some of his work was published 'for Clavier or Pianoforte.' An immediate consequence of this sudden rise of the pianoforte into popularity was, of course, the appearance of a new musical literature adapted to the peculiarities of the instrument. Among the first of the technical students of the pianoforte was Muzio Clementi,* whose *Gradus ad Parnassum*, or hundred exercises 'upon the art of playing the pianoforte in a severe and elegant style' made a deep impression upon the rising generation of musicians and are still considered of the highest educational value. Some of these exercises were published as early as 1784, though

* Muzio Clementi (1752-1832) is now remembered chiefly by his technical studies for the pianoforte, though a much greater portion of his work deserves recognition. He was a great concert pianist, a rival of whom Mozart was a little unwilling to admit the ability. A great part of his life was spent in England. He composed a great amount of music for the pianoforte which has little by little been displaced by that of Mozart; and in his own lifetime symphonies which once were hailed with acclaim fell into neglect before Haydn's. His pianoforte works expanded keyboard technique, especially in the direction of double notes and octaves, and were the first distinctly pianoforte works in distinction to works for the harpsichord.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

the collection was not made until 1817. An extract from the writing of one of Clementi's best pupils throws some light upon the standard of taste in regard to pianoforte playing which prevailed in Beethoven's early days. He says: 'I asked Clementi whether, in 1781, he had begun to treat the instrument in his present (1806) style. He answered *no*, and added that in those early days he had cultivated a more brilliant execution, especially in double stops, hardly known then, and in extemporized cadenzas, and that he had subsequently achieved a more melodic and noble style of performance after listening attentively to famous singers, and also by means of the perfected mechanism of English pianos, the construction of which formerly stood in the way of a cantabile and legato style of playing.' It is evident that Beethoven came upon the scene as pianoforte player not only when the improved instrument was almost in the first flush of its popularity, but also when virtuosity and the ability to astonish by difficult technical feats were sometimes mistaken for true artistic achievement.

By the time Beethoven's career as a composer began the sonata had already been developed, as we have seen, especially by Haydn and Mozart, into a model form whose validity was established for all time. Technically, it was a compromise between the German effort toward a logical and coherent harmonic expression, as represented by Emanuel Bach and others, and the Italian tendency toward melodic beauty and grace. The first thirty-one published instrumental compositions of Beethoven, as well as the great majority of all his works, are in this form, which seemed, indeed, to be the 'veil-like tissue through which he gazed into the realm of tones.' * With Haydn this form had reached a plane where structural lucidity was almost the first consideration. 'Musicians had arrived at that artifi-

* Wagner, Essay 'Beethoven.'

BEETHOVEN'S THREE CREATIVE PERIODS

cial state of mind which deliberately chose to be conscious of formal elements,' says Parry, 'and it was only by breathing a new and mightier spirit into the framework that the structure would escape becoming merely a collection of lifeless bones.' It was this spirit which Beethoven brought not only to the pianoforte sonata, but also to the symphony and quartet. His spirit, as we have seen, both in daily intercourse and in art, was of the sort to scoff at needless restrictions and defy conventionality. While, however, his rebellion against conventionality of conduct and artificiality in society was often somewhat excessive and superfluous, in his art it led him unerringly, not toward iconoclasm or even disregard of form, but toward the realities of human feeling.

VI

Beethoven's works extend to every field of composition. They include five concertos for piano and orchestra, one concerto for violin and orchestra, sixteen quartets for strings, ten sonatas for piano and violin, thirty-eight sonatas for piano, one opera, two masses, nine overtures and nine symphonies—about forty vocal and less than two hundred instrumental compositions in all. The division of the work into three periods, made by von Lenz in 1852 is, on the whole, a useful and just classification, when due allowance is made for the periods overlapping and merging into each other according to the different species of composition. The ideas of his mature life expressed themselves earlier in the sonatas than in the symphonies; therefore the first period, so far as the sonatas are concerned, ends with opus 22 (1801), while it includes the Second Symphony, composed, as has been noted, in 1802. Individual exceptions to the classification also occur, as, for example, the Quartet in F minor, which, though composed dur-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

ing the first period, shows strongly many of the characteristics of the second. In general, however, the early works may be said to spring from the pattern set by Haydn and Mozart. In regard to this Grove says: 'He began, as it was natural and inevitable he should, with, the best style of his day—the style of Mozart and Haydn, with melodies and passages that might be almost mistaken for theirs, with compositions apparently molded in intention on them. And yet even during this Mozartian epoch we meet with works or single movements which are not Mozart, which Mozart perhaps could not have written, and which very fully reveal the future Beethoven.'

In spite of being fully conscious of himself and knowing the power that was in him, Beethoven never was an iconoclast or radical. He was rather a builder whose architectural traditions came from ancient, well-accredited sources, in kinship probably somewhat closer to Haydn than to Mozart, though traces of Mozart are clearly evident. 'The topics are different, the eloquence is more vivid, more nervous, more full-blooded—there is far greater use of rhythmic gesture, a far more intimate and telling appeal to emotion, but in point of actual phraseology there is little that could not have been written by an unusually adult, virile, and self-willed follower of the accepted school. It is eighteenth century music raised to a higher power.*

The promise of a change in style, evident in the Kreutzer Sonata (1803) and in the pianoforte concerto in C minor, is practically completed in the Eroica Symphony (1804)—a change of which Beethoven was fully conscious and which he described in a letter as 'something new.' It began the second period, lasting until 1814, to which belongs a striking and remarkable group of works. In the long list are six symphonies, the third to the eighth inclusive, the opera *Fidelio* with its four

* 'Oxford History of Music,' Vol. V.

BEETHOVEN'S THREE CREATIVE PERIODS

overtures, the Coriolan overture, the Egmont music, the pianoforte concertos in G and E flat, the violin concerto, the Rasoumowsky quartets, and a dozen sonatas for the piano, among which are the D minor and the Appassionata. It was a period characterized by maturity, wealth of imagination, humor, power, and individuality to a marvellous degree. If Beethoven had done nothing after 1814, he would still be one of the very greatest composers in the field of pure instrumental music. His ideas increase in breadth and variety, the designs grow to magnificent proportions, the work becomes more harmonious and significant, touching many sides of thought and emotion.

In this period he broke through many of the conventions of composition, as, for example, the idea that certain musical forms required certain kinds of treatment. The rondo and scherzo, formerly always of a certain stated character, were made by him to express what he wished, according to his conception of the requirements of the piece. Likewise the number of his movements was determined by the character and content of the work, and the conventional repetition of themes was made a matter of choice. Moreover, the usual method of key succession was used only if agreeable to his idea of fitness. In the great majority of sonatas by Haydn and Mozart, if the first theme be given out in a major key, the second is placed in the dominant; or, if the first is in minor, the second would be in the relative major. Beethoven makes the transition to the dominant only three times out of eighty-one examples, using instead the subdominant, the third above, or the third below. He changes also from tonic major to tonic minor, and *vice versa*. With him the stereotyped restriction as to key succession was no longer valid when it conflicted with the necessity for greater freedom.

Again, Beethoven ignored the well-established con-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

vention of separating different sections from one another by well-defined breaks. It was the custom with earlier masters to stop at the end of a passage, 'to present arms, as it were,' with a series of chords or other conventional stop; with Beethoven this gives place to a method of subtly connecting, instead of separating, the different sections, for which he used parts of the main theme or phrases akin to it, thus making the connecting link an inherent part of the piece. He also makes use of episodes in the working-out section, introduces even new themes, and expands both the coda and the introduction. These modifications are of the nature of enlargements or developments of a plan already accepted, and seem, as Grove points out, 'to have sprung from the fact of his regarding his music less as a piece of technical performance than his predecessors had perhaps done, and more as the expression of the ideas with which his mind was charged.' These ideas were too wide and too various to be contained within the usual limits, and, therefore, the limits had to be enlarged. The thing of first importance to him was the idea, to be expressed exactly as he wished, without regard to theoretical formulæ, which too often had become dry and meaningless. Therefore he allows himself liberties—such as the use of consecutive fifths—if they convey the exact impression he wishes to convey. Other musicians had also allowed themselves such liberties, but not with the same high-handed individualistic confidence that Beethoven betrays. 'In Beethoven the fact was connected with the peculiar position he had taken in society, and with the new ideas which the general movement of freedom at the end of the eighteenth century, and the French Revolution in particular, had forced even into such strongholds as the Austrian courts. . . . What he felt he said, both in society and in his music. . . . The great difference is that, whereas in his ordinary intercourse he was ex-

BEETHOVEN'S THREE CREATIVE PERIODS

tremely abrupt and careless of effect, in his music he was exactly the reverse—painstaking, laborious, and never satisfied till he had conveyed his ideas in unmistakable language.*

In other words, conventional rules and regulations of composition which had formerly been the dominating factor were made subservient to what he considered the essentials—consistency of mood and the development of the poetic idea. He becomes the tone poet whose versatility and beauty of expression increase with the increasing power of his thought. Technical accessories of art were elevated to their highest importance, not for the sake of mere ornamentation, but because they were of use in enlarging and developing the idea.

During these years of rich achievement the staunch qualities of his genius, his delicacy and accuracy of sensation, his sound common sense and wisdom, his breadth of imagination, joy, humor, sanity, and moral earnestness—these qualities radiate from his work as if it were illuminated by an inward phosphorescent glow. He creates or translates for the listener a whole world of truth which cannot be expressed by speech, canvas, or marble, but is only capable of being revealed in the realm of sound. The gaiety of his music is large and beneficent; its humor is that of the gods at play; its sorrow is never whimpering; its cry of passion is never that of earthly desire. 'It is the gaiety which cries in the bird, rustles in the reeds, shines in spray; it is a voice as immediate as sunlight. Some new epithet must be invented for this music which narrates nothing, yet is epic; sings no articulate message, yet is lyric; moves to no distinguishable action, yet is already awake in the wide waters out of which a world is to awaken.' †

* Grove, Vol. I, p. 204.

† Arthur Symons, Essay 'Beethoven.'

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

The transition to the third period is even more definitely marked than that to the second. To it belong the pianoforte sonatas opus 101 to 111, the quartets opus 127 to 135, the Ninth Symphony, composed nearly eleven years after the eighth, and the mass in D—works built on even a grander scale than those of the second epoch. It would almost seem as if the form, enlarged and extended, ceased to exist as such and became a principle of growth, comparable only to the roots and fibres of a tree. The polyphony, quite unlike the old type of counterpoint, yet like that in that it is made up of distinct strands, is free and varied. Like the other artifices of technique, it serves only to repeat, intensify, or contrast the poetic idea. The usual medium of the orchestra is now insufficient to express his thought, therefore he adds a choral part for the full completion of the idea which had been germinating in his consciousness for more than twenty years. Moreover, these later works are touched with a mysticism almost beyond any words to define, as if the musician had ceased to speak in order to let the prophet have utterance. 'He passes beyond the horizon of a mere singer and poet and touches upon the domain of the seer and the prophet; where, in unison with all genuine mystics and ethical teachers, he delivers a message of religious love and resignation, identification with the sufferings of all living creatures, depreciation of self, negation of personality, release from the world.' *

More radical than the modifications mentioned above were the substitution of the scherzo for the minuet, and the introduction of a chorus into the symphony. It will be remembered that the third symphonic movement, the minuet, originally a slow, stately dance, had already been modified in spirit and tempo by Mozart and Haydn for the purpose of contrast. In his sym-

* Dannreuther, 'Beethoven,' Macmillan's Magazine, July, 1876.

BEETHOVEN'S THREE CREATIVE PERIODS

phonies, however, Beethoven abandoned the dance tune almost entirely, using it only in the Eighth. Even in the First, where the third movement is entitled 'menuetto,' it is in fact not a dance but a scherzo, and offers almost a miniature model of the longer and grander scherzos in such works as the Fifth and Ninth Symphonies, where, as elsewhere, he made the form subservient to his mood.

Of the second innovation mentioned, the finale of the Ninth Symphony remains as the sole, but lasting and stupendous, monument. This whole work, the only symphony of his last period, deserves to be studied not only as the crowning achievement of a remarkable career and the logical outcome of the eight earlier symphonies with their steadily increasing breadth and power, but also as in itself voicing the last and best message of the master. Its arrangement, consisting of five parts, is rather irregular. The *allegro* is followed by the scherzo, which in turn is followed by a slow movement. The finale consists of a theme with variations and a choral movement to the setting of Schiller's 'Ode to Joy.' The thought of composing a work which should express his ideals of universal peace and love had been in his mind since the year 1792. It seems as if he conceived the use of the chorus as an enlargement and enrichment of the forces of the orchestra, rather than as an extraneous addition—as if human voices were but another group of instruments swelling that great orchestral hymn which forms the poetic and dramatic climax to the work, 'carrying sentiment to the extremest pitch of exaltation.' The melody itself is far above the merely æsthetic or beautiful, it reaches the highest possible simplicity and nobility. 'Beethoven has emancipated this melody from all influences of fashion and fluctuating taste, and elevated it to an eternally valid type of pure humanity.' *

* Richard Wagner, Essay 'Beethoven.'

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

The changes in technical features inaugurated by Beethoven are of far less importance, comparatively, than the increase in æsthetic content, individuality, and expression. As has been noted, he was no iconoclast; seeking new effects in a striving for mere originality or altering forms for the mere sake of trying something new. On the contrary, his innovations were always undertaken with extreme discretion and only as necessity required; and even to the last the sonata form, 'that triune symmetry of exposition, illustration, and repetition,' can be discerned as the basis upon which his most extensive work was built. Even when this basis is not at first clearly apparent, the details which seemed to obscure it are found, upon study, to be the organic and logical amplification of the structure itself, never mere additions. It should be pointed out, however, that the last works, especially those for the piano, are of so transcendental or mystic a nature as to make it impossible for the average listener to appreciate them to their fullest extent; indeed, they provide a severe test even for a mature interpreter and for that reason they will hardly ever become popular.

VII

In spite of Beethoven's own assertion that his work is not meant to be 'program music,' his name will no doubt always be connected with that special phase of modern art. We have seen how distinctly he grasped the true principles of program or delineative music in his words, *Mehr Ausdruck der Empfindung als Malerei* (the expression of feeling, not a painting); never an imitation, but a reproduction of the effect. More than any musician of his own or earlier times was he able to saturate his composition with the mood which prompted it. For this reason the whole world sees pictures in

BEETHOVEN'S PLACE IN HISTORY

his sonatas and reads stories into his symphonies, as it has not done with the work of Haydn, Emanuel Bach, or Mozart. With the last-named composer it was sufficient to bring all the devices of art—balance, light and shade, contrast, repetition, surprise—to the perfection of an artistic ensemble, with a result which satisfies the æsthetic demands of the most fastidious. Beethoven's achievement was art plus mood or emotion; therefore the popular habit of calling the favorite sonata in C sharp minor the 'Moonlight Sonata,' unscholarly though it may be, is striking witness to one of the most fundamental of Beethoven's qualities—the power by which he imbued a given composition with a certain mood recognizable at once by imaginative minds. The aim at realism, however, is only apparent. That he is not a 'programmist,' in the accepted sense, is evident from the fact that he gave descriptive names to only the two symphonies, the *Eroica* and *Pastoral*. He does not tell a story, he produces a feeling, an impression. His work is the notable embodiment of Schopenhauer's idea: 'Music is not a representation of the world, but an immediate voice of the world.' Unlike the artist who complained that he disliked working out of doors because Nature 'put him out,' Beethoven was most himself when Nature spoke through him. This is the new element in music which was to germinate so variously in the music drama, tone poems and the like of the romantic writers of the nineteenth century.

In judging his operatic work, it has seemed to critics that Beethoven remained almost insensible to the requirements and limitations of a vocal style and was impatient of the restraints necessarily imposed upon all writing for the stage; with the result that his work spread out into something neither exactly dramatic nor oratorical. In spite of the obvious greatness of *Fidelio*, these charges have some validity. With his two

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

masses, again, he went far beyond the boundaries allotted by circumstance to any ecclesiastical production and arrived at something like a 'shapeless oratorio.' His variations, also, so far exceed the limit of form usually maintained by this species of composition that they are scarcely to be classed with those of any other composer. For the pianoforte, solo and in connection with other instruments, there are twenty-nine sets of this species of music, besides many brilliant instances of its use in larger works, such as the slow movement in the 'Appassionata,' and the slow movements of the Fifth and Ninth Symphonies. Sometimes he keeps the melody unchanged, weaving a varied accompaniment above, below, or around it; again he preserves the harmonic basis and embellishes the melody itself, these being types of variation well known also to other composers. Another method, however, peculiar to himself, is to subject each part—melody, rhythm, and harmony—to an interesting change, and yet with such skill and art that the individual theme still remains clearly recognizable. 'In no other form than that of the variation,' remarks Dannreuther, 'does Beethoven's creative power appear more wonderful and its effect on the art more difficult to measure.'

It is, however, primarily as symphonist and sonata writer that Beethoven stands preëminent. At the risk of another repetition we must again say that with Beethoven's treatment the sonata form assumes a new aspect, in that it serves as the golden bowl into which the intensity of his thought is poured, rather than the limiting framework of his art. He was disdainful of the attitude of the Viennese public which caused the virtuoso often to be confused with the artist. Brilliant passages were to him merely so much bombast and fury, unless there was a thought sufficiently intense to justify the extra vigor; and to him cleverness of fingers could not disguise emptiness of soul. 'Such is the vital

BEETHOVEN'S PLACE IN HISTORY

germ from which spring the real peculiarities and individualities of Beethoven's instrumental compositions. It must now be a form of spirit as well as a form of the framework; it is to become internal as well as external.' A musical movement in Beethoven is a continuous and complete poem; an organism which is gradually unfolded before us, rarely weakened by the purely conventional passages which were part of the *form* of his predecessors.

It must be noted, however, that Beethoven's subtle modifications in regard to form were possible only because Mozart and Haydn had so well prepared the way by their very insistence upon the exact divisions of any given piece. Audiences of that day enjoyed the well-defined structure, which enabled them to follow and know just where they were. Perhaps for that very reason they sooner grew tired of the obviously constructed piece, but in any case they were educated to a familiarity with form, and were habituated to the effort of following its general outlines. Beethoven profited by this circumstance, taking liberties, especially in his pianoforte compositions, which would have caused mental confusion and bewilderment to earlier audiences, but were understood and accepted with delight by his own. His mastery of musical design and logical accuracy enabled him so to express himself as to be universally understood. He demonstrated both the supremacy and the elasticity of the sonata form, taking his mechanism from the eighteenth century, and in return bequeathing a new style to the nineteenth—a style which separated the later school of Vienna from any that had preceded it, spread rapidly over Europe, and exercised its authority upon every succeeding composer.

His great service was twofold: to free the art from formalism and spirit-killing laws; and to lift it beyond the level of fashionable taste. In this service he typi-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

fies that spirit which, in the persons of Wordsworth, Lessing, Schiller, and Goethe, has rescued literary art from similar deadening influences. Wagner expressed this feeling when he said, 'For inasmuch as he elevated music, conformably to its utmost nature, out of its degradation as a merely diverting art to the height of its sublime calling, he has opened to us the understanding of that art in which the world explains itself.' Herein lies his true relation to the world of art and the secret of his greatness; for almost unchallenged he takes the supreme place in the realm of pure instrumental music. His power is that of intellect combined with greatness of character. 'He loves love rather than any of the images of love. He loves nature with the same, or even a more constant, passion. He loves God, whom he cannot name, whom he worships in no church built with hands, with an equal rapture. Virtue appears to him with the same loveliness as beauty. . . . There are times when he despairs for himself, never for the world. Law, order, a faultless celestial music, alone exist for him; and these he believed to have been settled before time was, in the heavens. Thus his music was neither revolt nor melancholy,' and it is this, the noblest expression of a strange and otherwise inarticulate soul, which lives for the eternal glory of the art of music.

F. B.

CHAPTER V

OPERATIC DEVELOPMENT IN ITALY AND FRANCE

Italian opera at the advent of Rossini—Rossini and the Italian operatic renaissance; *Guillaume Tell*—Donizetti and Bellini—Spontini and the historical opera—Meyerbeer's life and works—His influence and followers—Development of *opéra comique*; Auber, Hérold, Adam.

OPERATIC development in Italy and France during the first half of the nineteenth century represents, broadly speaking, the development of the romantic ideal by Rossini and Meyerbeer; a breaking away from classic and traditional forms; and the growth of individual freedom in musical expression. Rossini, as shown by subsequent detailed consideration of his works and the reforms they introduced, overthrows the time-honored operatic conventions of his day and breathes new life into Italian dramatic art. Spontini, 'the last great classicist of the lyric stage,' nevertheless forecasts French grand opera in his extensive historical scores. And French grand opera (as will be shown) is established as a definite type, and given shape and coherence by Rossini in *Tell*, by Meyerbeer in *Robert*, *Les Huguenots*, *Le Prophète*, and *l'Africaine*.

In this period the classical movement, interpreting in a manner the general trend of musical feeling in the eighteenth century, merges into the romantic movement, expressing that of the nineteenth. A widespread, independent rather than interdependent, musical activity in many directions at one and the same time explains such apparent contradictions as Beethoven and Rossini, Schubert, Cherubini, Spontini, Weber and Meyerbeer, all creating simultaneously. To understand

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

the operatic reforms of Rossini and their later development a *résumé* of the leading characteristics of the Italian opera of his day is necessary.

As is usually the case when an art-form has in the course of time crystallized into conventional formulas, a revolution of some sort was imminent in Italian opera at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In France Gluck had already banished from his scores the dreary *recitativo secco*, and extended the use of the chorus. The *opéra comique* had come to stay, finding its most notable exponents in Grétry, Méhul, and Boieldieu. Cherubini's nobly classic but cold and formal scores gave enjoyment to a capital which has at nearly all times been independent and self-sufficient. Mozart, in *Zauberflöte*, had already unlocked for Germany the sacred treasures of national art, and Weber,* following the general trend of German poetry and fiction, had inaugurated the romantic opera, a musical complement of the romantic literary movement, to which he gave its finest and fullest expression. Utilizing fairy tale and legend, he had secured for opera 'a wider stage and an ampler air,' and no longer relegating the beauties of Nature to the background, but treating them as an integral part of his artistic scheme, he laid the foundation upon which was eventually to rise the modern lyric drama.

But in Italy, beyond innate refinement of thought and grace of style, the composers whose names are identified with what was best in opera during the closing years of the eighteenth century had nothing to say. Cimarosa, Paesiello, Piccini (the one-time rival of Gluck) were prolific writers of the sort of melodious opera which had once delighted all Europe and still enchanted the opera-mad populace of Naples, Florence,

* Although Weber was born before Rossini (1786) and his period is synchronous with the present chapter, it has been thought best, because of his close connection with the romantic movement in Germany, to treat him in the next chapter.

THE ADVENT OF ROSSINI

Rome, and Venice. They had need to be prolific at a time when, as Burney says, an opera already heard was 'like a last year's almanac,' and when Venice alone could boast thirteen opera houses, public and private. Each had to compose unremittingly, sometimes three or even four operas a year, and it is hardly surprising that their works, for all their charm, were thin and conventional in orchestration, and had but scant variety of melodic line. The development of the symphonic forms of *aria* and *ensemble* by Mozart, the enlargement of the orchestra, and the exaggerated fondness for virtuoso singing encouraged these defects, and gave these Italian composers 'prosaically golden opportunities of lifting spectators and singers to the seventh heaven of flattered vanity.' There was little or no connection between the music and its drama. Speaking generally, the operatic ideals of Italy were those of old Galuppi, who, when asked to define good music, replied: '*Vaghezza, chiarezza e buona modulazione*' (vagueness, tenderness, and good modulation).

With all its faults the music of these eighteenth century masters excelled in a certain gracious suavity. Cimarosa, Paisiello and their contemporaries represent the perfection of the older Italian *opera buffa*, the classical Italian comic opera with secco-recitative, developed by Logroscino, Pergolesi, and Jommelli, a form which then reigned triumphant in all the large capitals of Europe. In the more artificial *opera seria* as well Cimarosa and Paisiello in particular achieved notable successes, and their works are the link which connects Italian opera with the most glorious period the lyric drama has known since the elevation of both Italian and German schools. But the criticism of the Abbé Arnaud, who said, 'These operas, for which their drama is only a pretext, are nothing but concerts,' is altogether just.

The reforms of Gluck and the romantic movement

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

in Germany in no wise disturbed the trend of Italian operatic composition. Weber's influence was negligible, for Italian operatic composers were, as a rule, indifferent to what was going on, musically, outside their own land. Those who, like Francesco Morlacchi (1784-1841) or the Bavarian Simon Mayr (1763-1845), were brought into contact with Weber or his works, showed their indebtedness to him rather in their endeavors to secure broader and more interesting harmonic development of their melodies and greater orchestral color than in any direct working out of his ideals. But one native Italian was destined to exert an influence, the constructive power of which, within the confines of his own land, equalled that exerted by Weber in Germany. The time was at hand when in Italy, the citadel of operatic conventionality and formalism, a reaction against vapidness of idea, affectation, and worn-out sentimentality was to find its leaders in Rossini, the 'Swan of Pesaro,' and his followers and disciples, Bellini and Donizetti.

I

Gioacchino Antonio Rossini, his father a trumpeter, his mother a baker's daughter, was born in Pesaro, February 29, 1792, and had his first musical instruction, on the harpsichord, from Prinetti, a musician of Novara, who played the scale with two fingers only and fell asleep while giving lessons. He soon left his first teacher, but when, at the age of fifteen, he was admitted to the counterpoint class of Padre P. S. Mattei, he read well at sight, and could play both the pianoforte and the horn. At the Conservatory of Bologna, under Cavendish, he also learned to play the 'cello with ease.

His insight into orchestral writing, however, came rather from the knowledge he gained by scoring

GIOACCHINO ROSSINI

Haydn's and Mozart's quartets and symphonies than from Mattei's instruction. For counterpoint he never had much sympathy; but, though the stricter forms of composition did not appeal to him, he was well enough grounded in the grammar of his art to enable him at all times to give the most effective expression to the delicious conceptions which continually presented themselves to his mind.

In 1808 the Conservatory of Bologna awarded him a prize for his cantata *Il pianto d'armonia per la morte d'Orfeo*, and two years later the favor of the Marquis Cavalli secured the performance of his first opera, *Il cambiale di matrimonio*, at Venice. Rossini now produced opera after opera with varying fortune in Bologna, Rome, Venice, and Milan. The success of *La pietra del paragone* (Milan, 1812), in which he introduced his celebrated *crescendo*,* was eclipsed by that of *Tancredi* (Venice, 1813), the only one among these early works of which the memory has survived. In it the plagiarism to which Rossini was prone is strongly evident; it contains fragments of both Paer and Paisiello. But the public was carried away with the verve and ingenuity of the opera, and the charm of melodies like *Mi rivedrai, ti rivedrò*, which, we are told, so caught the public fancy that judges in the courts of law were obliged to call those present to order for singing it. Even the arrival of the Emperor Napoleon in Venice, which took place at the time, could not compete in popular interest with the performances of *Tancredi*. In 1814 Rossini's *Il turco in Italia* was heard in Milan, and in the next year he agreed to take the musical direction of the Teatro del Fondo at Naples, with the understanding that he was to compose two operas every year, and in return to receive a stipend of 200 ducats

* Two measures in the tonic, repeated in the dominant, the whole gone over three times with increasing dynamic emphasis, constituted the famous Rossini *crescendo*.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

(approximately one hundred and seventy-five dollars) a month, and an annual share of the gaming tables amounting to one thousand ducats (eight hundred and seventy-five dollars)!

In Naples the presence of Zingarelli and Paesiello gave rise to intrigue against the young composer, but all opposition was overcome by the enthusiastic manner in which the court received *Elisabetta, regina d'Inghilterra*, set to a libretto by Schmidt, which anticipated by a few years the incidents of Scott's 'Kenilworth.' As in *La pietra del paragone*, Rossini had first made effective use of the *crescendo*, so in *Elisabetta* he introduced other innovations. The classic *recitative secco* was replaced by a recitative accompanied by a quartet of strings.* And for the first time Rossini wrote out the 'ornaments' of the arias, instead of leaving them to the fancy of the singers, on whose good taste and sense of fitness he had found he could not depend.

A version by Sterbini of Beaumarchais' comedy, *Le Barbier de Seville*, furnished the libretto for his next opera. Given the same year at Rome, at first under the title of *Almaviva*, it encountered unusual odds. Rome was a stronghold of the existing conventional type of Italian opera which Rossini and his followers in a measure superseded. There, as elsewhere, Paesiello's *Barbiere* had been a favorite of twenty-five years' standing. Hence Rossini's audacity to use the same libretto was so strongly resented that his opera was promptly and vehemently hissed from the stage. But had not Paesiello himself, many years before, tried to dim the glory of Pergolesi by resetting the libretto of *La serva padrona*? Perhaps Italy considered it a matter of poetic justice, for the success of Rossini's *Barbiere di Siviglia*, brightest and wittiest of comic operas, was

* The recitatives sung by the character of Christ in Bach's St. Matthew Passion are so accompanied. Bach likewise wrote out the vocal ornaments of all his arias.

GIOACCHINO ROSSINI

deferred no longer than the second performance, and it soon cast Paesiello's feeble score into utter oblivion.

Of the twelve operas which followed from Rossini's pen between 1815 and 1823, *Otello* (Rome, 1816) and *Semiramide* (Venice, 1823) may be considered the finest. In them the composer's reform of the *opera seria* culminated. 'William Tell' belongs to another period and presents a wholly different phase of his creative activity. In the field of *opera buffa*, *La Cenerentola* (Cinderella), given in Rome in 1817, is ranked after *Il barbiere*. It offers an interesting comparison with Nicolo Isouard's * *Cendrillon*. In the French composer's score all is fragrant with the atmosphere of fairyland and rich in psychic moods; in Rossini's treatment of the same subject all is realistic humor and dazzling vocal effect. He accepted the libretto of *Cenerentola* only on condition that the supernatural element should be omitted! It is the last of his operas which he brought to a brilliant close for the sake of an individual *prima donna*.

La gazza ladra, produced in Milan the same year, was long considered Rossini's best work. It is characteristic of all that is best in his Italian period. The tuneful overture with its *crescendo*—with the exception of the *Tell* overture the best of all he has written—arias, duets, ensembles, and finales are admirable. The part-writing in the chorus numbers is inferior to that of none of his other works. Two romantic operas, *Armida* (1817)—the only one of Rossini's Italian operas provided with a ballet—and *Ricciardo e Zoraide* (1818), both given in Naples, are rich in imagination and contain fine choral numbers.

In 1820 the Carbonarist revolution, which drove out

* Nicolo Isouard is a typical character of the time. He was born on the island of Malta, educated in Paris, showing unusual ability as a pianist, prepared for the navy and established in trade in Naples. Finally against his father's wishes he became a composer. To spare his family disgrace he wrote under the name of Nicolo. He died in Paris in 1818.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

King Ferdinand IV, ruined Rossini's friend Barbaja and induced Rossini to visit Vienna. On his way, in 1821, he married Isabella Colbran, a handsome and wealthy Spanish *prima donna*, seven years older than himself, who had taken a leading part in the first performance of his *Elisabetta* six years before. Upon his return to Bologna a flattering invitation from Prince Metternich to 'assist in the general reëstablishment of harmony,' took him to Verona for the opening of the Congress, October 20, 1822. Here he conducted a number of his operas, and wrote a pastoral cantata, *Il vero omaggio*, and some marches for the amusement of the royalties and statesmen there assembled, and made the acquaintance of Chateaubriand and Madame de Lieven. The cool reception accorded his *Semiramide* in Venice probably had something to do with his accepting the suggestion of Benelli, the manager of the King's Theatre in London, to pay that capital a visit. He went to England late in the year and remained there for five months, receiving many flattering attentions at court and being presented to King George IV, with whom he breakfasted *tête-à-tête*. His connection with the London opera during his stay netted him over seven thousand pounds.

Between the years 1815 and 1823—a comparatively short space of time—Rossini had completely overthrown the operatic ideals of Cimarosa and Paesello, and by sheer intelligence, trenchant vigor, marvellous keenness in measuring the popular appetite and ability to gratify it with novel sensations he entirely remodelled both the *opera seria* and the *opera buffa*.

Rossini created without effort, for nature had granted him, as she has granted most Italian composers, the power of giving a nameless grace to all he wrote. Yet he was more than versatile, more than merely facile. In spite of his weakness for popular success and the homage of the multitude, he was no musical charlatan.

GIOACCHINO ROSSINI

Even his weakest productions were stronger than those of the best of his Italian contemporaries. His early study of Mozart had drawn his attention to the need of improvement in Italian methods, and, as a result, his instrumentation was richer, and—thanks to his own natural instinct for orchestral color—more glowing and varied than any previously produced in Italy. In his *cantabile* melodies he often attained telling emotional expression, he enriched the existing order with a wider range of novel forms and ornamentations, and he abandoned the lifeless recitative in favor of a more dramatic style of accompanied recitation.

In the Italy of Rossini the *prima donna* was the supreme arbiter of the lyric stage, and individual singers became the idols of kings and peoples. Such singers as Pasta, whose voice ranged from a to high d; the contraltos Isabella Colbrand (Rossini's first wife) and Malibran, who, despite the occasional 'dead' tones in her middle register, never failed of an ovation when she sang in Rome, Naples, Bologna, or Milan; Teresa Belloc, the dramatic mezzo-soprano, who was a favorite interpreter of Rossinian rôles; Fanny Persiani, so celebrated as a coloratura soprano that she was called *la piccola Pasta*; Henriette Sontag, most wonderful of Rosines; and Catalani, mistress of bravura; the tenors Rubini, Manuel Garcia, Nourrit; the basses Luigi Labache, Levasseur, and Tamburini, these were the sovereigns of the days of Rossini and Meyerbeer. But their reign was not as absolute as Farinelli's and Senesino's in an earlier day. The new ideas which claimed that the singer existed for the sake of the opera, and not the opera for that of the singer, inevitably, though slowly, reacted in the direction of proportion and fitness.

Rossini was the first to insist on writing out the coloratura cadenzas and fioriture passages, which the great singers still demanded, instead of leaving them to the

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

discretion, or indiscretion, of the artists. It had been the custom to allow each soprano twenty measures at the end of her solo, during which she improvised at will. As a matter of fact, the *candenzas* Rossini wrote for his *prime donne* were quite as florid as any they might have devised, but they were at least consistent; and his determined stand in the matter sounded the death-knell of the old tradition that the opera was primarily a vehicle for the display of individual vocal virtuosity. He was also the first of the Italians to assign the leading parts to contraltos and basses; to make each dramatic scene one continuous musical movement; and to amplify and develop the concerted finale. These widespread reforms culminate, for *opera buffa*, in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, and for *opera seria* in *Semiramide* and *Otello*.

Il Barbiere, with its witty and amusing plot and its entertaining and brilliant music, is one of the few operas by Rossini performed at the present time. It gives genuine expression in music to Beaumarchais' comedy—a comedy of gallantry, not of love—and the music is developed out of the action of the story. So perfect is the unity of the work in this respect that its *coloratura arias*, such as the celebrated one of Rosine's, do not even appear as a concession made to virtuoso technique. One admirer speaks of the score, in language perhaps a trifle exaggerated, as 'a glittering, multicolored bird of paradise, who had dipped his glowing plumage in the rose of the dawn and the laughing, glorious sunshine,' and says that 'each note is like a dewdrop quivering on a rose-leaf.' Stendhal says: 'Rossini has had the happy thought, whether by chance or deliberate intention, of being primarily himself in the "Barber of Seville." In seeking an intimate acquaintance with Rossini's style we should look for it in this score.'

In *Otello*, which offers a suggestive contrast with the

GIOACCHINO ROSSINI

treatment of the same subject by Verdi at a similar point of his artistic development, the transition from *recitativo secco* to pure recitative, begun in *Elisabetta*, was carried to completion. Shakespeare's tragedy was, in a measure, 'butchered to make a Roman holiday,' the Roman public of Rossini's day insisting on happy endings, which therefore had to be invented. And it is claimed that there are still places in Italy in which the Shakespearian end of the story can never be performed without interruption from the audience, who warn Desdemona of Othello's deadly approach. *Otello* is essentially a melodrama. In his music Rossini has portrayed a drama of action rather than a tragedy. There is no inner psychological development, but an easily grasped tale of passion of much scenic effect, though in some of the dramatic scenes the passionate accent is smothered beneath roulades. But if the musical Othello himself is unconvincing from the tragic point of view, in Desdemona Rossini has portrayed in music a character of real tragic beauty and elevation. Two great artists, Pasta and Malibran, have immortalized the rôle—'Pasta, imposing and severe as grief itself,' and Malibran, more restless and impetuous, 'rushing up trembling, bathed in her tears and tresses.' *Semiramide* composed in forty days to a libretto by Rossi,* gains a special interest because of its strong leaven of Mozart. In Rossini's own day and long afterward it was considered his best *opera seria*, always excepting *Tell*. The judgment of our own day largely agrees in looking upon it as an almost perfect example of the *rococo* style in music.

Rossini's removal to Paris in 1824, when he became

* Gaetano Rossi (1780-1855), an Italian librettist, quite as prolific as Scribe and as popular as a text-writer among his own countrymen as the latter was in Paris, wrote the book of *Semiramide*. Among his texts were: Donizetti's *Linda di Chamounix* and *Maria Padilla*; Guecco's *La prova d'un opera seria*; Mercadante's *Il Giuramento*; Rossini's *Tancredi*; and Meyerbeer's *Crociato in Egitto*.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

musical director of the Théâtre des Italiens, marks the beginning of another stage of his development, one that produced but a single opera, *Guillaume Tell*, but that one a masterpiece.

Owing to Rossini's activity in his new position, which he held for only eighteen months, the technical standard of performance was decidedly raised. Among the works he produced were *Il viaggio a Reims* (1825), heard again three years later in a revised and augmented version as *Le Comte Ory*, and Meyerbeer's *Il Crociato*, the first work of that composer to be heard in Paris. In 1826 Charles X appointed him 'first composer to the king' and 'inspector-general of singing in France,' two sinecures the combined salaries of which amounted to twenty thousand francs. Rossini, who had a keen sense of humor, is said to have been in the habit of stopping in the street, when some pavement singer raised his voice, or the sound of song floated down from some open window, and whispering to his friends to be silent 'because the inspector of singing was busy gathering material for his next official report.'

The leisure thus afforded him gave him an opportunity to revise and improve his older works, and to devote himself to a serious study of Beethoven. Between 1810 and 1828 he had produced forty distinct works; in 1829 he produced the one great score of his second period, which in most respects outweighs all the others. It was to be the first of a series of five operas which the king had commissioned him to write for the Paris opera, but the overthrow of Charles X made the agreement void in regard to the others.

The libretto of *Guillaume Tell*, which adheres closely to Schiller's drama, was written by Étienne Jouy and Hippolyte Bis, and further altered according to Rossini's own suggestions. Though the original drama contains fine situations, the libretto was not an ideal

GUILLAUME TELL

one for musical treatment. Musically it ranks far above any of his previous scores, since into the Italian fabric of his own creation he had woven all that was best in French operatic tradition. The brilliant and often inappropriate *fioriture* with which many of the works of his first period were overladen gave way to a clear melodic style, befitting the simple nobility of his subject and better qualified than his earlier style to justify the title given him of 'father of modern operatic melody.' No longer abstract types nor mere vehicles for vocal display, his singers sang with the dramatic accents of genuine passion. The conventional *cavatina* was deliberately avoided. The choruses were planned with greater breadth and with an admirable regard for unity. The orchestration developed a wonderful diversity of color, and breathed fresh and genuine life through the entire score. The overture, not a dramatic preface, but a pastoral symphony in abridged form, with the obligatory three movements—*allegro, andante, presto*; the huntsman's chorus; the duet between Tell and Arnold; the finale of the first act; the prelude to the second and Matilda's aria; the grandiose scene on the Rütli, the festival scene and the storm scene are, perhaps, the most noteworthy numbers.

It cost Rossini six months to compose *Guillaume Tell*, the time in which he might have written six of his earlier Italian operas. The result of earnest study and deep reflection, it shows both French and German influences; something of German depth and sincerity of expression, a good deal of French *esprit* and dramatic truth, and the usual Italian grace are its composite elements. The ease and fluency of Rossini's style persist unchanged, while he discards mere mannerisms and rises to heights of genuine dramatic intensity he had not before attained. The new and varied instrumental timbres he employed no doubt had a considerable

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

share in forming modern French composers' taste for delicate orchestral effects.

Tell marks a transitional stage in the history of opera. It is to be regretted that it does not also mark a transitional stage in the composer's own creative activity, instead of its climax. There is interesting matter for speculation in what Rossini might have accomplished had he not decided to retire from the operatic field at the age of thirty-seven. After the success of *Guillaume Tell* he retired for a time to Bologna to continue his work according to the terms of his Paris contract—he had been considering the subject of *Faust* for an opera—and was filled with ambitious plans for the inauguration of a new epoch in French opera. When, in November, 1830, he returned to Paris his agreement had been repudiated by the government of Louis Philippe, and the interest in dramatic music had waned. In 1832 he wrote six movements of his brilliant *Stabat mater* (completed in 1839, the year of his father's death) and in 1836, after the triumph of Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots*, he determined to give over operatic composition altogether. His motive in so doing has always been more or less a mystery. It has been claimed that he was jealous of Meyerbeer's success, but his personal relations with Meyerbeer were friendly. One of Rossini's last compositions, in fact, was a piano-forte fantasia on motives of Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine*, the final rehearsal of which he had attended. And after his death there was found among his manuscripts a requiem chant in memory of Meyerbeer, who had died four years before. Another and more probable theory is that the successive mutilation of what he regarded as his greatest work (it was seldom given in its complete form) checked his ardor for operatic composition. Again, as he himself remarked to a friend, 'A new work if successful could not add to my reputation, while if it failed it might detract from it.' And,

GUILLAUME TELL

finally, Rossini was by nature pleasure-loving and fond of the good things of life. He had amassed a considerable fortune, and it is quite possible that he felt himself unequal to submitting again to the strain he had undergone in composing *Tell*. He told Hiller quite frankly that when a man had composed thirty-seven operas he began to feel a little tired, and his determination to write no more allowed him to enjoy the happiness of not outliving his capacity for production, far less his reputation.

His first wife had died in 1845. In the interval between the production of *Tell* and his second marriage in 1847, with Olympe Pelissier (who sat to Horace Vernet for his picture of 'Judith and Holofernes'), the reaction of years of ceaseless creative work, domestic troubles, and the annoyance of his law suit against the French government had seriously affected him physically and mentally. His marriage with Mme. Pelissier was a happy one, and he regained his good spirits and health. Leaving Bologna during the year of his second marriage, he remained for a time in Florence, and in 1855 settled in Paris, where his *salon* became an artistic and musical centre. Here Richard Wagner visited him in 1860, a visit of which he has left an interesting record. The *Stabat mater* (its first six numbers composed in 1832), completed in 1842, and given with tremendous success at the Italiens; his *Soirées musicales* (1834), a set of album leaves for one and two voices; his Requiem Mass (*Petite messe solennelle*), and some instrumental solos comprise the entire output of his last forty years. He died Nov. 13, 1868, at his country house at Passy, rich in honors and dignities, leaving the major portion of a large fortune to his native town of Pesaro, to be used for humanitarian and artistic ends.

It has been said, and with truth, that to a considerable extent the musical drama from Gluck to Richard Wagner is the work of Rossini. He assimilated what

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

was useful of the old style and used it in establishing the character of his reforms. In developing the musical drama Rossini, in spite of the classic origin of his manner, may be considered one of the first representatives of romantic art. And by thus laying a solid foundation for the musical drama Rossini afforded those who came after him an opportunity of giving it atmosphere and, eventually, elevating its style. 'As a representative figure Rossini has no superior in the history of the musical drama and his name is the name of an art epoch.'

Rossini's remodelling of Italian opera, representing, as it did, the Italian spirit of his day in highest creative florescence, could not fail to influence his contemporaries. Chief among those who followed in his footsteps were Donizetti and Bellini. Though without the artistic genius of their illustrious countryman, they are identified with him in the movement he inaugurated and assisted him in maintaining Italian opera in its old position against the increasing onslaughts from foreign quarters.

II

Gaetano Donizetti (1798-1848) was a pupil of Simon Mayr in his native city of Bergamo, and later of Rossini's master, Mattei, of Bologna. His first dramatic attempt was an *opera seria*, *Enrico conte di Borgogna*, given successfully in Venice in 1818. Obtaining his discharge from the army, in which he had enlisted in consequence of a quarrel with his father, he devoted himself entirely to operatic composition, writing in all sixty-five operas—he composed with incredible rapidity and is said to have orchestrated an entire opera in thirty hours—but, succumbing to brain trouble, brought on by the strain of overwork, he died when barely fifty years of age.

GAETANO DONIZETTI

He added three unaffectedly tuneful and vivacious operas to the *opera buffa* repertory: *La fille du régiment*, *L'Elisir d'amore*, and *Don Pasquale*. In these he is undoubtedly at his best, for he discards the affectations he cultivated in his serious work to satisfy the prevailing taste of his day and gives free rein to his imagination and his power of humorous characterization.

La fille du régiment made the rounds of the German and Italian opera houses before the Parisians were willing to reconsider their verdict after its first unsuccessful production at the Opéra Comique in 1840. It presents a tale of love which does not run smooth, but which terminates happily when a high-born mother at length allows her daughter to marry a Napoleonic officer, her inferior in birth. Though the music is slight, it is free from pretense and unaffectedly gay. Like Rossini, Donizetti settled in France after his reputation was established and suited his style to the taste of his adopted country. In a minor degree the differences between Rossini's *Tell* and his *Semiramide* are the same as those between Donizetti's *Fille du régiment* and one of his Italian operas. But there parallel ends. The 'Daughter of the Regiment' shows, however, that Donizetti's lighter operas have stood the test of time better than his more serious ones.

L'Elisir d'amore (Milan, 1832) also contains some spontaneous and gracefully fresh and captivating music. The plot is childish, but musically the score ranks with that of *Don Pasquale* (Paris, 1843), the plot of which turns on a trick played by two young lovers upon the uncle and guardian of one of them. This brilliant trifle made a tremendous success, and in it Donizetti's gay vivacity reached its climax. It was the last of his notable contributions to the *opera buffa* of the Rossinian school. Written for the Théâtre des Italiens, and sung for the first time by Grisi, Mario,

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

Tambarini, and Lablache, its success was in striking contrast to the failure of *Don Sebastien*, a large serious opera produced soon afterward.

The vogue of Donizetti's serious operas has practically passed away. To modern ears, despite much tender melody and occasional dramatic expressiveness, they sound stilted and lacking in vitality. *Lucia di Lammermoor*, founded on Scott's tragic romance 'The Bride of Lammermoor' (Naples, 1835), immensely popular in the composer's day, is still given as a 'prima donna's opera,' for the virtuoso display of some favorite artist. The fine sextet enjoys undiminished popularity in its original form as well as in instrumental arrangements, but in general the composer's subservience to the false standard of public taste detracts from the music. An instance is the 'mad-scene,' ridiculous from the dramatic standpoint, with its smooth and polished melody, ending in a virtuoso *fioritura* cadenza for voice and flute!

The same criticism applies to the tuneful *Lucrezia Borgia* (Milan, 1833), which, in spite of charming melodies and occasionally effective concerted numbers, is orchestrated in a thin and childish manner. *Anna Bolena* (Milan, 1830), written for Pasta and Rubini, after the good old Italian fashion of adapting rôles to singers, and *Marino Falieri* (1835) were both written in rivalry with Bellini, and the failure of the last-named opera was responsible for the supreme effort which produced *Lucia*. More important is *Linda di Chamounix*, which aroused such enthusiasm when first performed in Vienna, in 1842, that the emperor conferred the title of court composer on its composer. But *La Favorita*, with its repulsive plot, which shares with *Lucia* the honor of being the best of Donizetti's serious operas, is superior to *Linda* in the care with which it has been written and in the dramatic power of the ensemble numbers. *Spirito gentil*, the delightful romance

VINCENZO BELLINI

in the last act, is perhaps the best-known aria in the score. In *Lucia* and *La Favorita* Donizetti's melodic inspiration—his sole claim to the favor of posterity—finds its freest and most spontaneous development.

While Donizetti had an occasional sense of dramatic effect, his contemporary, Vincenzo Bellini (1802-1835); the son of an organist of Catania, showed a genius which, if wanting in wit and vivacity, had much melancholy sweetness and a certain elegiac solemnity of expression. He had studied the works of both the German and Italian composers, in particular those of Pergolesi, and, like Donizetti, he fell a victim to the strain of persistent overwork. Among his ten operas—he did not attempt the *buffa* style—three stand out prominently: *La Sonnambula* (Milan, 1831), *Norma* (Milan, 1831), and *I Puritani* (Paris, 1835).

La Sonnambula, in which the singer Pasta created the title rôle, is an admirable example of Bellini in his most tender and idyllic mood. A graceful melodiousness fills the score and the closing scene attains genuine sincerity and pathos. *Norma* (Milan, 1831), set to a strong and moving libretto by the poet Felice Romani, is a tragedy of Druidic Britain, and in it the composer may be considered to have reached his highest level. At a time like the present, when the art of singing is not cultivated to the pitch of perfection that was the standard in the composer's own period, a modern rendering of *Norma*, for instance, is apt to lose in dramatic intensity, since Bellini and the other followers of Rossini were content to provide a rich, broad flow of *cantilena* melody, leaving it to the singers to infuse in it dramatic force and meaning—something which Tamburini, Rubini, and other great Italian singers were well able to do.

Norma surpasses *I Puritani* in the real beauty and force of its libretto, and gains thereby in musical consistency; but the latter opera, which shows French in-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

fluences to some extent, cannot be excelled as regards the tender pathos and sweet sincerity of its melodies, which, like those in the composer's other works, depend on *bel canto* for their effect. Triumphantly successful at the Théâtre des Italiens in Paris, 1834, this last of Bellini's works may well have been that of which Wagner wrote: 'I shall never forget the impression made upon me by an opera of Bellini at a period when I was completely exhausted with the everlasting abstract complication used in our orchestras, when a simple and noble melody was revealed to me anew.' In a manner Bellini may be considered a link between the exuberant force and consummate *savoir-faire* of Rossini's French period and the more earnest earlier efforts of Verdi.

Though Donizetti and Bellini are the leading figures in the group of composers identified with Rossini's operatic reforms, a few other names call for mention here: Saverio Mercadante, who composed both *opera seria* and *opera buffa*—a gifted but careless writer whose best-known work is the tragic opera *Il Giuramento* (Milan, 1837); Giovanni Pacini, whose *Safo*, a direct imitation of Rossini, was most successful; and Niccolo Vaccai, better known for his vocal exercises—still in general use—than for his once popular opera *Giuletta e Romeo* (Milan, 1825). Meyerbeer's seven Italian operas, *Romilda e Constanza*, *Semiramide riconosciuta*, *Eduardo e Christina*, *Emma di Resburgo*, *Margherita di Anjou*, *L'Esule di Granata*, and *Il Crociato in Egitto*, which were due directly to the admiration he had conceived for Rossini in 1815, and of which he afterward repented, also properly belong in this enumeration.

III

Meanwhile the reform in Italian opera associated with Rossini made itself felt in Germany, where, in opera, the Italian style was still supreme, by way of one of the most remarkable figures in the history of music. Gassaro Spontini (1774-1851), the son of a cobbler of Ancona, had studied composition at the Conservatorio dei Turichi in Naples. By 1799 he had written and produced eight operas. Appointed court composer to King Ferdinand of Naples the same year, he was compelled to leave that city in 1800, in consequence of the discovery of an intrigue he had been carrying on with a princess of the court. Two comic operas, *Julie* and *La petite maison* (Paris, 1804), having been hissed, he determined to drop the *buffa* style completely. The production of *Milton* (one act) in 1804 was his first gage of adherence to the higher ideals he henceforth made his own.

He was influenced materially by an earnest study of Gluck and Mozart and through his friendship with the dramatic poet Étienne Jouy. *La Vestale* (1807), his first great success, was the result of three years of effort, and upon its performance at the Académie Impériale, through the influence of the Empress Josephine, a public triumph, it won the prize offered by Napoleon for the best dramatic work. In *La Vestale*, one of the finest works of its class, Spontini superseded the *parlando* of Italian opera with accompanied recitative, increased the strength of his orchestra—contemporary criticism accused him of overloading his scores with orchestration—and employed large choruses with telling effect. *La Vestale* glorified the pseudo-classicism of the French directory; *Ferdinando Cortez*, which duplicated the success of that opera two years later, represents an attempt on the part of Napoleon to in-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

gratiate himself with the Spanish nation he designed to conquer.

The same year the composer married the daughter of Érard, the celebrated piano-maker, and in 1810 he became director of the Italian Opera. In this capacity he paid tribute to the German influences which had molded his artistic views by giving the first Parisian performance of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and organizing concerts at which music by Haydn and other German composers was heard. Court composer to Louis XVIII in 1814, he was for five years mainly occupied with the writing of *Olympie*, set to a clumsy and undramatic libretto, which he himself considered his masterwork, though its production in 1819 was a failure.

Five months after this disappointment, in response to an invitation of Frederick William III of Prussia, he settled in Berlin, becoming director of the Royal Opera, with an excellent salary and plenty of leisure time. In spite of difficulties with the intendant, Count Brühl, he accomplished much. *Die Vestalin*, *Ferdinando Cortez*, and *Olympie*, prepared with inconceivable effort, were produced with great success in 1821. But in the same year Weber's *Freischütz*, full of romantic fervor and directly appealing to the heart of the German nation, turned public favor away from Spontini. In *Nourmahal* (1822), the libretto founded on Moore's 'Lalla Rookh,' and *Alcidor* (1825) Spontini evidently chose subjects of a more fanciful type in order to compete with Weber. His librettos were poor, however, and the purely romantic was unsuited to his mode of thought. In *Agnes von Hohenstaufen*, planned on a grander scale than any of his previous scores, he reverted again to his former style. It is beyond all doubt Spontini's greatest work. In grandeur of style and imaginative breadth it excels both *La Vestale* and *Ferdinando Cortez*. So thoroughgoing were Spontini's revisions that when it was again given in Berlin in

GIACOMO MEYERBEER

1837 many who had heard it when first performed did not recognize it.

Spontini's suspicious and despotic nature, which made him almost impossible to get along with, led to his dismissal, though with titles and salary, in 1841. Thereafter he lived much in retirement and died in 1851. His music belonged essentially to the epic period of the first French empire. The wearied nations, after the fall of Napoleon, craved sensuous beauty of sound, lullabies, arias, cavatinas, tenderness, and wit rather than stateliness and grandeur. Thus the political conditions of the time favored Rossini's success and, in a measure, at Spontini's expense. Spontini was the direct precursor of Meyerbeer, who was to develop the 'historical' opera, to which the former had given distinction, with its large lines and stateliness of detail, its broadly human and heroic appeal, into the more melodramatic and violently contrasted type generally known as French 'grand' opera.

Giacomo Meyerbeer (1791-1863), first known as Jacob Meyer Beer, the son of the wealthy Jewish banker Bèer, of Berlin, was an 'infant prodigy,' for, when but nine years old, he was accounted the best pianist in Berlin. The first teacher to exert a decided influence on him was Abbé Vogler, organist and theoretician, of Darmstadt, to whom he went in 1810, living in his home and, with Carl Maria von Weber, taking daily lessons in counterpoint, fugue, and organ playing. Appointed composer to the court by the grand duke two years later, his first opera, 'Jephtha's Vow,' failed at Darmstadt (1811), and his second, *Alimelek*, at Vienna in 1814. Though cruelly discouraged, he took Salieri's advice and, persevering, went to Italy to study vocalization and form a new style.

In Venice Rossini's influence affected him so powerfully that, giving up all idea of developing a style of

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

his own, he produced the seven Italian operas already mentioned, with brilliant and unlooked for success, which, however, did not impress his former fellow student, Weber, who deplored them as treasonable to the ideals of German art. Meyerbeer himself, before long, regretted his defection. In fact, the last of the operas of this Italian period, *Il Crociato in Egitto* (Venice, 1824), is no longer so evidently after the manner of Rossini. It was given all over Italy, in London, Paris, St. Petersburg, and even at Rio de Janeiro. Weber considered it a sign that the composer would soon abandon the Italian style and return to a higher ideal. The success of *Il Crociato* gave Meyerbeer an excellent opportunity of visiting Paris, in consequence of Rossini's staging it at the Italiens, in 1826, where it achieved a triumph. The grief into which the death of his father and of his two children plunged him interrupted for some time his activity in the operatic field. He returned to Germany and until 1830 wrote nothing for public performance, but composed a number of psalms, motets, cantatas, and songs of an austere sentimental character, among them his well-known 'The Monk.' This was his second, or German, period.

It is probable that in 1830 he planned his first distinctively French opera, *Robert le Diable*, for which the clever librettist Eugène Scribe wrote the book. The first performance of that work, typically a grand romantic opera, on November 22, 1831, aroused unbounded enthusiasm. Yet certain contemporary critics called it 'the acme of insane fiction' and spoke of it as 'the apotheosis of blasphemy, indecency, and absurdity.' Schumann and Mendelssohn disapproved of it—the latter accused its music of being 'cold and heartless'—and Spontini, because of professional jealousy, condemned it. Liszt and Berlioz, on the other hand, were full of admiration. There is no doubt that text and music had united to create a tremendous impres-

GIACOMO MEYERBEER

sion. The libretto, in spite of faults, was theatrically effective; the music was pregnant, melodious, sensuously pleasing and rendered dramatic by reason of shrill contrasting orchestral coloring. So striking was the impression it made at the time—though from our present-day standpoint it is decidedly *vieux jeu*—that its faults passed almost unobserved.

From the standpoint of the ideal, the work is lacking in many respects. First intended for the *opéra comique*, its remodelling by Scribe and Meyerbeer himself had built up a kind of romantic and symbolic vision around the original comedy. The Robert (loyal, proud, and loving) and Isabella (tender and kind) of the original were the same, but the characters of Bertram and Alice had been elevated, respectively, to the dignity of angels of evil and of good, struggling to obtain possession of Robert's soul, thus exalting the entire work. The change had given the score a mixed character, somewhat between drama and comedy, making it a romantic opera in the manner of *Euryanthe* or *Oberon*. Still, excess of variety in effects, the occasional lack of melodic distinction, and want of character do not affect its forceful expression and dramatic boldness. The influence of Rossini and of Auber, whose *Muette de Portici* had been given three years before, of Gluck and Weber was apparent in *Robert le Diable*, yet as a score it was different and in some respects absolutely novel. If Meyerbeer had less creative spontaneity and freshness than Rossini and less ease than Auber, in breadth of musical education he surpassed them both.

In a measure both Spontini and Rossini may be excused if they thought that Meyerbeer, in developing their art tendencies, transformed and distorted them. Spontini, no doubt, looked on him as a huckster who bartered away the sacred mysteries of creative art for the sake of cheap applause. The straightforward Ros-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

sini probably thought him a hypocrite. And therein they both wronged him. An eclectic, 'an art-lover rather than an artist,' Meyerbeer revelled in the luxury of using every style and attempting every novelty, in order to prove himself master of whatever he undertook. But he was undeniably honest in all that he did, though he lacked that spontaneity which belongs to the artist alone. And in *Les Huguenots*, his next work, first performed in 1836, five years after *Robert*, he composed an opera which in gorgeous color, human interest, consistent dramatic treatment and accentuation of individual types, in force and breadth generally, marked a decided advance on its predecessor.

Les Huguenots was not a historical opera in the sense of *Tell*. In *Tell* Rossini showed himself as an Italian and a patriot. The Hapsburgs of his hero's day were the same who, at the time he wrote, oppressed his countrymen. Gessler stood for the imperial governor of Lombardy, his guards for Austrian soldiers; the liberty-loving Swiss he identified with the Lombards and Venetians whose liberties were attacked. But, though the subject of Meyerbeer's opera is an episode of the 'Massacre of St. Bartholomew,' that episode is merely used as a sinister background, against which his warm and living characters move and tell their story. *Les Huguenots* may be considered Meyerbeer's most finished and representative score. Not a single element of color and contrast has escaped him. In only two respects did its interest fall short of that awakened by its predecessor. So successful had the composer been in his treatment of the supernatural in *Robert* that the omission of that element now was regretted; and, more important, the fifth act proved to be an anti-climax. The opera, when given now, usually ends at the fourth act, when Raoul, leaping from the window to his death, leaves Valentine fainting. In psychological truth *Les Huguenots* is undoubtedly su-

MEYERBEER'S WORKS

perior to *Robert*. There is a double interest: that of knowing how the mutual love of Valentine the Catholic and Raoul the Protestant will turn out; and that of the drama in general, *against* which and not *out* of which the fate of the Huguenots is developed.

In the third act especially the opera develops a breadth and eloquence maintained to the end. The varied shadings of this picture of Paris, its ensembles, contrasted yet never confounded, constitute, in Berlioz's words, 'a magnificent musical tissue.' *Les Huguenots*, like *Robert*, made the tour of the world. And, as *Tell* was prohibited in Austria, for political reasons, so Meyerbeer's opera was forbidden in strictly Catholic lands. This did not prevent its performance under such titles as *The Guelphs* or *The Ghibellines at Pisa*; a letter to Meyerbeer shows that he refused an arrangement of the libretto entitled *The Swedes before Prague*!

After *Les Huguenots* had been produced Meyerbeer spent a number of years in the preparation of his next works, *L'Africaine* and *Le Prophète*. Scribe * had supplied the librettos for both these works, and both underwent countless revisions and changes at Meyerbeer's hands. The story of *L'Africaine* was more than once entirely rewritten. In the meantime the composer had accepted (after Spontini's withdrawal) the appointment of kapellmeister to the king of Prussia and spent some years in Berlin. Here he composed psalms, sacred cantatas, a secular choral work with living pictures, *Una festa nella corte di Ferrara*; the first of his four 'Torchlight Marches,' for the wedding of Prince Max of Bavaria with Princess Mary of Prussia, and a cantata for soli, chorus and brasses, set to a poem of

* Eugène Scribe (1791-1861) was the librettist *de mode* of the period. Aside from his novels he wrote over a hundred libretti, including Meyerbeer's *Robert*, *Les Huguenots*, *Le Prophète*, and *l'Africaine*; Auber's *La Muette*, *Fra Diavolo*, *Le domino noir*, *Les diamants de la couronne*; Halévy's *La Juive* and *Manon Lescault*; Boieldieu's *Dame blanche*; and Verdi's *Les vèpres siciliennes*.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

King Louis I of Bavaria. In 1843 he produced *Das Feldlager in Schlesien* (The Camp in Silesia), a German opera, based on anecdotes of Frederick the Great, the national hero of Prussia; which, coldly received at first, was at once successful when the brilliant Swedish soprano, Jenny Lind, made her first appearance in Prussia in it, as Vielka, the heroine. Three years later he composed the incidental music for *Struensee*, a drama written by his brother Michael. The overture is still considered an example of his orchestration at his best.

His chief care, however, from 1843 to 1847 was bestowed on worthily presenting the works of others at the Berlin Opera. Gluck's *Armida* and *Iphigenia in Tauris*; Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, *Zauberflöte*; Beethoven's *Fidelio*; Weber's *Freischütz* and *Euryanthe*; and Spohr's *Faust*, the last a tribute of appreciation. He even procured the acceptance of Wagner's *Der fliegende Holländer* and *Rienzi*, that 'brilliant, showy, and effective exercise in the grand opera manner,' whose first performance he directed in 1847.

In 1849 Meyerbeer produced *Le Prophète* in Paris, after many months of rehearsal. The score shows greater elevation and grandeur than that of *Les Huguenots*, but it is marred by contradictions and inequalities of style. In spite of its success and many undeniably beautiful sections, it betrays a falling off of the composer's creative power; and it suffers from overemphasis. His two successful efforts to compete with the composers of French *opéra comique* on their own ground, *L'Étoile du Nord* and *Le pardon de Ploërmel* ('Dinorah'), were heard in Paris in 1854 and 1859, respectively. *L'Étoile du Nord* was practically *Das Feldlager in Schlesien*, worked over and given a Russian instead of a Prussian background. Its success was troubled by the last illness and death of the composer's mother, to whom he was passionately attached. A number of

MEYERBEER'S WORKS

shorter vocal and instrumental compositions were written during the five years that elapsed between its *première* and that of his second comic opera. This, *Le Pardon de Ploërmel*, was set to a libretto by Carré and Barbier. It is a charming pastoral work, easy, graceful, and picturesque. Its music throughout is tuneful and bright, but its inane libretto has much to do with the neglect into which it has fallen.

From 1859 to 1864, besides the shorter compositions alluded to, Meyerbeer worked on various unfinished scores: a *Judith*, Blaze de Bury's *Jeunesse de Goethe*, and others. He left a quantity of unfinished manuscripts of all kinds at his death. But mainly during this period he was busy with the score of *L'Africaine*, his last great opera. When at length, after years of hesitation, he had decided to have it performed and it was in active preparation at the opera, he was seized with a sudden illness and died, May 2, 1864. He had not been spared to witness the first performance of this which he loved above all his other operas and on which he lavished untold pains. It was produced, however, with regard to his wishes, April 28, 1865, and was a tremendous success. Scribe's libretto contains many poetic scenes and effective situations and gave the composer every opportunity to manifest his genius.

It is the most consistent of his works. In it he displays remarkable skill in delineation of characters and situations. His music, in the scenes that occur in India, is rich in glowing oriental color. Nowhere has he made a finer use of the hues of the orchestral palette. And in the fifth act, which crowns the entire work, he exalts to the highest emotional pitch the noble and touching character of his heroine, Selika, who sacrifices her love for Vasco da Gama, that the latter may be happy with the woman he loves. In dignity and serenity the melodies of *L'Africaine* surpass those of the composer's other operas. Its music, though in general less popular

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

than that of *Les Huguenots*, is of a finer calibre, and the ceaseless striving after effect, so apparent in much of his other work, is absent in this.

The worth of Meyerbeer's talent has long been realized, despite the fact that Wagner, urged by personal reasons, has ungratefully called him 'a miserable music-maker,' and 'a Jewish banker to whom it occurred to compose operas.' Granting that his qualities were those of the master artisan rather than the master artist, admitting his weakness for 'voluptuous ballets, for passion torn to tatters, ecclesiastical display, and violent death,' for violent contrast rather than subtle characterization, he still lives in his influence, which may be said to have founded the melodramatic school of opera now so popular, of which *Cavalleria rusticana* is perhaps the most striking example. As long as intensity of passion and power of dramatic treatment are regarded as fitting in dramatic music his name will live. Zola's eulogy, put in the mouth of one of the characters in his *L'Œuvre*, rings true:

'Meyerbeer, a shrewd fellow who profited by everything, . . . bringing, after Weber, the symphony into opera, giving dramatic expression to the unconscious formula of Rossini. Oh, what superb evocations, feudal pomp, military mysticism, the thrill of fantastic legend, the cries of passion traversing history. And what skill the personality of the instruments, dramatic recitative symphonically accompanied by the orchestra, the typical phrase upon which an entire work is built. . . . An ingenious fellow, a most ingenious fellow!'

* * *

The French grand opera of Rossini and Meyerbeer was the musical expression of dramatic passionate sentiments, affording scope to every excellence of vocal and orchestral technique and even to every device of stage setting. It is not strange that it appealed to con-

MEYERBEER'S INFLUENCE

temporary composers, even Auber, Hérold, Halévy, and Adam, though more generally identified with the *opéra comique*, attempted grand opera with varying success.

Auber, in his *La muette de Portici* ('Masaniello'), given in 1828, meets Spontini, Rossini, and Meyerbeer on their own ground with a historical drama of considerable beauty and power. Its portrayal of revolutionary sentiment was so convincing that its first performance in Brussels (1830) precipitated the revolution which ended in the separation of Holland and Belgium. Hérold united with Auber's elegance and polish greater depth of feeling. *Zampa* (1831), a grand opera on a fanciful subject, and *Le pré aux clercs* (1832) are his best serious operas. His early death cut short the development of his unusual dramatic gift. Halévy even went so far as to distort his natural style in the effort to emulate Meyerbeer. Of his grand operas, *La Juive* (1835), *La Reine de Chypre* (1841), *Charles VI* (1834), *La Tempesta* (1850), only the first, a work of gloomy sublimity, with fine melodies and much good instrumentation, may be called a masterpiece. Adam's few attempts at grand opera were entirely unsuccessful, though his comic operas enjoyed tremendous vogue.

But the influence of Rossini and Meyerbeer on grand opera has continued far beyond their own time. The style of *La Patrie* by Paladilhe is directly influenced by Meyerbeer. Verdi, in his earlier works, *Guido*, *Trovatore*, *I Lombardi*, shows traces of his methods. Gounod, in the 'dispute' scene in the fourth act of *Romeo et Juliette* likewise reflects Meyerbeer; and Wagner was not above profiting from him whom he most scornfully and unjustly belittled.

In summing up the contributions of Rossini and Meyerbeer to the history of music, it may be said that their operas, and in particular those of the latter, are

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

a continuation and amplification of the heritage of Gluck. Édouard Schuré says in his important work, *Le Drame Musical*: 'The secret of the opera of Meyerbeer is the pursuit of effect for effect's sake.' Yet it will be remembered that Gluck himself wrote in the preface of his *Alceste*: 'I attach no importance to formulas; I have sacrificed all to the effect to be produced.' The art of Gluck and the art of Meyerbeer have the same point of departure, and each is expressed in formulas which, while quite distinct and individual, denote the highest dramatic genius. Both Rossini and Meyerbeer increased the value of the orchestra in expressing emotion in all its phases in connection with the drama; and helped to open the way for the later development of French grand opera and the innovations of Richard Wagner. Weber and Schubert had both died before Meyerbeer began to play an important part. Succeeding Spontini and Rossini as the dominant figure of the grand opera stage, his real successor was Richard Wagner. But, though Rossini, Meyerbeer, and their followers had enriched the technical resources of opera, had broadened the range of topic and plot, yet they had not turned aside the main current of operatic composition very far from its bed. The romantic and dramatic tendencies which they had introduced, however, were to bear fruit more especially in French romanticism and the development of the evolution of the French *opéra comique* into the *drame lyrique*.

IV

An account of the origin and development of the French *opéra comique* as a purely national form of dramatic musical entertainment has already been given in the chapter dealing with Gluck's operatic re-

BOIELDIEU AND OPÉRA COMIQUE

form. Here we will briefly show its development during the period of which he have spoken.

François-Adrien Boieldieu * may be considered (together with Niccolò Isouard) the last composer of the older type of *opéra comique*, to which his operas *Jean de Paris* and *La dame blanche* gave a new and lasting distinction. As Pougin says: 'It is positive that comic opera, as Boieldieu understood it, was an art-work, delicate in type, with genuine flavor and an essentially varied color.' Boieldieu was especially successful in utilizing the rhythmic life of French folk song, and *La dame blanche* has those same qualities of solid merit and real musical invention found in the serious *opéra comique* of Cherubini and Méhul. In fact, it was these three composers who gave the *genre* a new trend. In Scudo's words, Boieldieu's work is 'the happy transition from Grétry to Hérold and, together with Méhul and Cherubini, the highest musical expression in the comic opera field. After Boieldieu's time the influence of Rossini became so strong that *opéra comique* began to lose its character as a distinct national operatic form.'

The influence of Rossini was especially noticeable in the work of the group of *opéra comique* composers, including Auber, Hérold, Halévy, Adam, Victor Massé, Maillard, who were to prepare the way for the lyric drama of Thomas and Gounod. The contributions of Auber, Hérold and Halévy to the 'historical' or grand opera repertory have already been mentioned in the review of operatic development in Italy and France. Here we will only consider their work as a factor in transforming the French comic opera of Méhul and Boieldieu into the more sentimental and fanciful type, of which the modern romantic French opera was to be born. One fact which furthered the transition from *opéra comique* to *drame lyrique* was the frequent ab-

* Born, Rouen, 1775; died, near Paris, 1834.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

sence of the element of farce, with the consequent encouragement of a more poetic and romantic musical development.

Daniel-François-Esprit Auber (1782-1871) uninterruptedly busy from 1840 to 1871,* and his name identified with many of the greatest successes of the comic opera stage of his time, has been somewhat unjustly termed 'a superficial Rossini.' Auber undoubtedly borrowed from Rossini in his musical treatment of the comic, and he had little idea of powerful ensemble effects or of polyphonic writing; but grace, sweetness, and brilliancy of instrumentation cannot be denied him. 'The child of Voltaire and Rossini,' from about 1822 on he wrote operas in conjunction with the librettist Scribe. *Fra Diavolo* (1830) shows Auber at his best in comic opera. 'The music is gay and tuneful, without dropping into commonplace; the rhythms are brilliant and varied, and the orchestration neat and appropriate.' Incidentally, it might be remarked that Auber has written an opera on a subject which since his time has appealed both to Massenet and Puccini, *Manon Lescaut* (1856), which in places foreshadows Verdi's ardently dramatic art.

In spite of Auber's personal and professional success (not only was he considered one of the greatest operatic composers of his day, but also he succeeded Gossec in the Académie (1835), was director of the Conservatory of Music (1842), and imperial *maître de chapelle* to Napoleon III) he was essentially modest. With more confidence in himself than Meyerbeer he was quite as unpretentious as the latter. Though by no means ungrateful to the artists who contributed to the success of his works he would say: 'I don't cuddle

* When only a boy of eleven he composed pretty airs which the décolletées nymphs of the Directory sang between waltzes at the soirées given by Barras, and he survived the fall of the Second Empire. *Les pantins de Violette*, a charming little score, was given at the Bouffes four days before he died.

them and put them in cotton-wool, like Meyerbeer. It is perfectly logical that he should do so. The Nourrits, the Levasseurs, the Viardot-Garcias, and the Rogers are not picked up at street corners; but bring me the first urchin you meet who has a decent voice and a fair amount of intelligence and in six months he'll sing the most difficult part I ever wrote, with the exception of that of Masaniello. My operas are a kind of warming-pan for great singers. There is something in being a good warming-pan.'

Hérold's most distinctive comic operas are *Marie* and *Le Muletier* (1848). The last-named is a setting of a rather spicy libretto by Paul de Kock, the novelist whose field was that of 'middle class Parisian life, of *guingettes* and *cabarets* and equivocal adventures,' and was highly successful. It seems a far cry from an operetta of this style to the romanticism of the *drame lyrique*. But if an occasional score harked back as regards vulgarity of subject to the equivocal popular couplets which the Comtesse du Barry had Larrivée sing for the entertainment of the sexagenarian Louis XV at Luciennes some sixty years before, it only serves to emphasize by contrast the trend in the direction of a finer expression of sentiment. Halévy's masterpiece in comic opera is *L'Éclair* (1835). A curiosity of musical literature, it is written for two tenors and two sopranos, without a chorus; 'and displays in a favorable light the composer's mastery of the most refined effects of instrumentation and vocalization.' Wagner, while living in greatly reduced circumstances in Paris, had been glad to arrange a piano score and various quartets for strings of Halévy's *Guitarrero* (1841).

The most famous of Auber's disciples was Adolphe-Charles Adam (1802-1856). Adam had been one of Boieldieu's favorite pupils and was an adept at copying Auber's style. Auber's music gained or lost in value according to the chance that conditioned its composer's

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

inspiration; but it was always spiritual, elegant, and ingenious, hiding real science and dignity beneath the mask of frivolity. Adam, on the other hand, was an excellent imitator, but his music was not original. He wrote more than fifty light, exceedingly tuneful and 'catchy' light operas, of which *Le Châlet* (1834); *Le postillon de Longjumeau* (1836), which had a tremendous vogue throughout Europe; *Le brasseur de Preston* (1838); *Le roi d'Yvetot* (1842), and *Cagliostro* (1844) are the best known. Grisar, another disciple of Auber, furnishes another example of graceful facility in writing, combined with a lack of originality. Maillart's (1817-1871) *Les dragons de Villars*, which duplicated its Parisian successes in Germany under the title of *Das Glöckchen des Eremiten*, was the most popular of the six operas he wrote. Victor Massé (1822-1884) is known chiefly by *Galathée* (1852), *Les noces de Jeanette* (1853), and *Paul et Virginie* (1876).

F. H. M.

CHAPTER VI

THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT: ITS CHARACTERISTICS AND ITS GROWTH

Modern music and modern history; characteristics of the music of the romantic period—Schubert and the German romantic movement in literature—Weber and the German reawakening—The Paris of 1830: French romanticism—Franz Liszt—Hector Berlioz—Chopin; Mendelssohn—Leipzig and Robert Schumann—Romanticism and classicism.

I

MODERN history—the history of modern art and modern thought, as well as that of modern politics—dates from July 14, 1789, the capture of the Bastille at the hands of the Parisian mob. Carlyle says there is only one other real date in all history, and that is one without a date, lost in the mists of legends—the Trojan war. There is no political event, no war or rumor of war among the European nations of to-day which, when traced to its source, does not somehow flow from that howling rabble which sweated and cursed all day long before the prison—symbol of absolute artistocratic power—overpowered the handful of guards which defended it and made known to the king, through his minister, its message: ‘Sire, this is not an insurrection; it is a revolution!’

For a century and a quarter the mob of July 14th has stood like a wall between the Middle Ages and modern times. No less than modern politics, modern thought and all its artistic expression date from 1789. For, against the authority of hereditary rules and

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

rulers, the mob of the Bastille proclaimed another authority, namely that of facts. The notion that forms should square with facts and not facts with forms then became the basis of men's thinking. This truth had existed as a theory in the minds of individual thinkers for many decades—even for many centuries. But the Parisian mob first revealed the truth of it by enacting it as a fact. From that fact the truth spread among men's minds, forcing them, according to their lights, to bring all forms and authorities to the test of facts. Babies, who were to be the next generation's great men, were brought up in this kind of thought and were subtly inoculated with it so that their later thinking was based upon it, whether they would or no. And so men have come to ask of a monarch, not whether he is a legitimate son of his house, but whether he derives his authority from the will of the nation. They have come to ask of a philosophy, not whether it is consistent, but whether it is true. And they have come to ask of an art-form, not whether it is perfect, but whether it is fitting to its subject-matter.

When we come to compare the music of the nineteenth century with that of the century preceding we find a contrast as striking as that between the state of Europe as Napoleon left it with that as he found it. The Europe of the eighteenth century was for the most part a conglomeration of petty states, without national feeling, without standing armies in the modern sense—states which their princes ruled as private property for the supplying of their personal wants, with power of life and death over their subjects; states whose soldiers ran away after the second volley and whose warfare was little more than a formal and rather stupid chess game; states whose statesmanship was the merest personal intrigue of favorites. Among these states a few half-trained mobs of revolutionary armies spread terror, and the young Napoleon amazed them by dem-

CHARACTERISTICS OF ROMANTIC MUSIC

onstrating that soldiers who had their hearts in a great cause could outfight those who had not.

So, in contrast to the crystal clear symphonies of the eighteenth century and the vocal roulades and delicate clavichord suites, we find in the nineteenth huge orchestral works, grandiose operas, the shattering of established forms, an astonishing increase in the size of the orchestra and the complexity of its parts, the association of music with high poetic ideas, and the utter rejection of most of the prevailing harmonic rules. And with this extension of scope there came a profound deepening in content, as much more profound and human as the Parisian mob's notion of society was more profound and human than that of Louis XVI. The revolution and the Napoleonic age, which had been periods of dazzling personal glory, in which individual ability and will power became effective as never before, had stimulated the egotistic impulses of the nineteenth century. People came to feel that a thing could perhaps be good merely because they wanted it. Hence the personal and emotional notes sound in the music of the nineteenth century as they never sounded before. The sentimental musings of Chopin, the intense emotional expression of Schumann's songs, the wild and willful iconoclasm of Berlioz's symphonies were personal in the highest degree. And, as the complement to this individual expression, there dawned a certain folk or mob-expression, for the post-Napoleonic age was also an age of national awakening. The feeling of men that they are part of a group of human beings rather than of a remote empire is the feeling which we have in primitive literature, in the epics and fairy stories, the ballads and folk epics. This folk-feeling came to brilliant expression in Liszt's Hungarian rhapsodies, and the deep heroic note sounds quite as grandly in his symphonic poems. Music took on a power, by the aid of subtle suggestion, of evoking

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

physical images; and, in deeper sincerity, it achieved something like accurate depiction of the emotions. A thousand shades of expression, never dreamed of before, were brought into the art. Men's ears became more delicate, in that they distinguished nuance of tone and phrase, and particularly the individual qualities of various instruments, as never before; it was the great age of the pianoforte, in which the instrument was dowered with a musical literature of its own, comparable in range and beauty with that of the orchestra. The instruments of the orchestra, too, were cultivated with attention to their peculiar powers, and the potentialities of orchestral expression were multiplied many times over.

It was the great age of subdivision into schools and of the development of national expression. The differences between German, French, and Italian music in the eighteenth century are little more than matters of taste and emphasis—variations from one stock. But the national schools which developed during the romantic period differ utterly in their musical material and treatment.

It was the golden age of virtuosity. The technical facility of such men as Kalkbrenner and Czerny came to dazzling fruition in Liszt and Paganini, whose concert tours were triumphal journeys and whose names were on people's lips like those of great national conquerors. This virtuosity took hold of people's imaginations; Liszt and Paganini became, even during their lifetimes, glittering miraculous legends. Their exploits were, during the third and fourth decades of the century, the substitute for those of Napoleon in the first fifteen years. Their exploits expanded with the growing interrelation of modern life. The great growth of newspaper circulation in the Napoleonic age, and the spread of railroads through the continent in the thir-

CHARACTERISTICS OF ROMANTIC MUSIC

ties, increased many times the glory and extent of the virtuoso's great deeds.

But the travelling virtuoso was a symbol of a far more important fact. For in this age musicians began to break away entirely from the personal patron; they appealed, for their justification and support, from the prince to the people. The name of a great musician was, thanks to the means of communication, spread broadcast among men, and there was something like an adequate living to be made by a composer-pianist from his concerts and the sale of his compositions. From the time of the revolution on it was the French state, with its Conservatory and its theatres, not the French court, which was the chief patron of the arts. And from Napoleonic times on it was the people at large, or at least the more cultured part of them, whose approval the artist sought. In all essentials, from the fall of Napoleon onward, it was a modern world in which the musician found himself.

But it is evident that we cannot get along far in this examination of romantic music without reviewing the outward social history of the time. It is a time of colors we can never discover from a mere observation of outward facts and dates, for it is a time of complexities of superficial intrigue likely to obscure its meaning. We must, therefore, see the period, not as most historians give it to us, but as a movement of great masses of people and of the growing ideas which directed their actions. Royal courts and popular assemblies were not the real facts, but only the clearing houses for the real facts. The balances, on one or the other side of the ledger, which they showed bear only the roughest kind of relation to the truth.

It is well to skeleton this period with five dates. The first is the one already met, 1789. The next is the assumption of the consulate by Napoleon in 1799, which was practically the beginning of the empire. The next

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

is the fall of Napoleon, which we may place in 1814, after the battle of Leipzig, or in 1815, after Waterloo, as we prefer. The next is 1830, when, after conservative reaction throughout Europe, the mobs in most of the great capitals raised insurrections, and in some cases overthrew governments and obtained some measure of constitutional law. And the last is 1848, when these popular outbreaks recurred in still more serious form, and with a proletarian consciousness that made this revolution the precursor of the twentieth century as certainly as 1789 was the precursor of the nineteenth.

We cannot here give the details of the mighty and prolonged struggle—we shall only recall to the reader the astounding sequence of cataclysms and exploits that shook Europe; roused its consciousness strata by strata; remodelled its face, its thought, its ideals, its laws, and its arts. Paris was the nervous centre of this upheaval, the stage upon which the most conspicuous acts were paraded; but every blow struck in that arena reëchoed, multiplied, throughout Europe, just as every wave of the turmoil originating in any part of Europe recorded itself upon the seismograph of Paris. From the tyranny and unthinking submission of before 1789 we pass to a period of constitutional tolerance of the monarchical form; thence to the aggressive propaganda for republican principles and the terror; thence to the personal exploits of a popular hero, arousing wonder and admiration while imposing a new sort of tyranny. Stimulated imaginations now give birth to new enthusiasms, stir up the feelings of national unity and pride; to consciousness of nationality succeeds consciousness of class—reactions and restorations bring new revolutions, successful mobs impose terms on submissive monarchs, at Paris in 1833 as at Berlin in 1848; then finally follows the communist manifesto. France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Bohemia, even England, were convulsed with this glorious upheaval; and not

CHARACTERISTICS OF ROMANTIC MUSIC

kings and soldiers alone, but men of peaceful moods—workingmen, men of professions, poets, artists, musicians—were borne into this whirlpool of politics. Musicians of the eighteenth century had no thoughts but of their art; those of the nineteenth were national enthusiasts, celebrants of contemporary heroes, political philosophers, propagandists, and agitators. What wonder? Since the days of Julius Cæsar had there been any concrete events to take hold of men's imaginations as these did? They set all men 'thinking big.' If the difference between a Haydn symphony of 1790 and Beethoven's Ninth of 1826 is the difference between a toy shop and the open world, is not the cause to be found mainly in these battles of the nations? Not only Beethoven—Berlioz, Chopin, Liszt, and Wagner, the political exile, were affected by the successive events of 1789 to 1848. As proof of how closely musical history coincides with the revolution wrought by these momentous years, let us recall that Beethoven, the real source of romantic music, lived at the time of Napoleon and by the *Eroica* symphony actually touches Napoleon; and that by the year 1848, which is the last of those dates which we have chosen as the historic outline of the romantic movement in music, Schubert and Weber were long dead, Mendelssohn was dead, Chopin was almost on his deathbed, Schumann was drifting toward the end, Berlioz was weary of life, and Liszt was working quietly at Weimar, which had been for years one of the most liberal spots in Germany. And, as if Wagner's dreams of a mighty national music attended the realization of the dream of all Germany, the foundation stone of the national theatre at Bayreuth was laid hardly a year after the unity of the German empire was declared at Versailles in 1871.

How shall we characterize the music of this period? In musical terms it is almost impossible to characterize it as a whole, for the steady stream of tradition had

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

broken up violently into a multitude of forms and styles, and these must be characterized one by one as they come under our consideration. As a whole, it must be characterized in broader terms. For the assertion of the Parisian mob was at the bottom of it all. Previously men's imaginations had been bounded by the traditional types; they took it for granted that they must contain themselves within the limitations to which they had been born. But since a dirty rabble had overturned the power of the Bourbons, and an obscure Corsican had married into the house of Hapsburg, men realized that nothing is impossible; limitations are made only to be broken down. The intellectual giant of the age had brought this realization to supreme literary expression in 'Faust,' the epic of the man who would include within himself all truth and all experience. And, whereas the ideal of the previous age had been to work within limits and so become perfect, the ideal of this latter age was to work without limits and so become great. Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century this sense of freedom to achieve the impossible was the presiding genius of music.

And with it, as a corollary to it, came one thing more, a thing which is the second great message of Goethe's 'Faust'—the idea that truth must be personally experienced, that while it is abstract it is non-existent. Faust could not know love except by being young and falling in love. He could not achieve his redemption by understanding the beauty of service; he must redeem himself by actually serving his fellowmen. And so in the nineteenth century men came to feel that beautiful music cannot be merely contemplated and admired, but must be lived with and felt. Accordingly composers of this period emphasized continually the sensuous in their music, developing orchestral colors, dazzling masses of tone, intense harmonies and biting dissonances, delicate half-lights of modulation, and the

SCHUBERT AND ROMANTIC LITERATURE

deep magic of human song. The change in attitude from music as a thing to be admired to music as a thing to be felt is perhaps the chief musical fact of the early nineteenth century.

II

Let us now consider the great romantic composers as men living amid the stress and turmoil of revolution. All but Schubert were more or less closely in touch with it. All but him and Mendelssohn were distinctly revolutionists, skilled as composers and hardly less skilled to defend in impassioned prose the music they had written. As champions of the 'new' in music they are best studied against the background of young Europe in arms and exultant.

But in the case of Franz Schubert we can almost dispense with the background. His determining influences, so far as they affected his peculiar contributions to music, were almost wholly literary. He was an ideal example of what we call the 'pure musician.' There is nothing to indicate that he was interested in anything but his art. He lived in or near Vienna during all the Napoleonic invasions, but was concerned only with escaping military service. Schubert was the last of the musical specialists. From the time when his schoolmaster father first directed his musical inclinations he had only one interest in the world, outside of the ordinary amusements of his Bohemian life. If Bach was dominated by his Protestant piety and Handel by the lure of outward success, Schubert worked for no other reason than his love of the beautiful sounds which he created (and of which he heard few enough in his short lifetime).

Yet even here we are forced back for a moment to the political background. For it is to be noticed

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

that the great German composers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century found their activities centred in and near Vienna: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert are all preëminently Austrian. In the second quarter of the nineteenth century—that is, after the death of Schubert—there is not a single great composer living in Vienna for more than a short period of time. The political situation of Vienna, the stronghold of darkness at this time, must have had a blighting effect on vigorous and open-minded men. At a time when the most stimulating intellectual life was surging through Germany generally, Vienna was suffering the most rigid censorship and not a ray of light from the intellectual world was permitted to enter the city. Weber felt this in 1814 in Austrian Prague. He wrote: ‘The few composers and scholars who live here groan for the most part under a yoke which has reduced them to slavery and taken away the spirit which distinguishes the true free-born artist.’ Weber, a true free-born artist, left Prague at the earliest opportunity and went to Dresden, where the national movement, though frowned upon, was open and aggressive. Schubert, on the contrary, because of poverty and indolence, never left Vienna and the territory immediately surrounding. In the preceding generation, when music was still flowing in the calm traditions, composers could work best in such a shut-in environment. (It is possibly well to remember, however, that Austria had a fit of liberalism in the two decades preceding Napoleon’s régime.) But with the nineteenth century things changed; when the beacon of national life was lighting the best spirits of the time, the composers left Vienna and scattered over Germany or settled in Paris and London. Schubert alone remained, his imagination indifferent to the world beyond. In all things but one he was a remnant of the eighteenth century, living on within the walls of the eighteenth century Vienna. But this one thing,

SCHUBERT AND ROMANTIC LITERATURE

which made him a romanticist, a link between the past and the present, a promise for the future, was connected, like all the other important things of the time, with the revolution and the Napoleonic convulsions. It was, in short, the German national movement expressed in the only form in which it could penetrate to Vienna; namely, the romantic movement in literature. Not in the least that Schubert recognized it as such; his simple soul doubtless saw nothing in it but an opportunity for beautiful melodies. But its inspiration was the German nationalist movement.

The fuel was furnished in the eighteenth century in the renaissance of German folk-lore and folk poetry. The researches of Scott among the Scotch Highlands, Bishop Percy's 'Reliques' of English and Scottish folk poetry, the vogue which Goethe's *Werther* gave to Ossian and his supposed Welsh poetry, and, most of all, the ballads of Bürger, including the immortal 'Lenore,' contributed, toward the end of the century, to an intense interest in old Germanic popular literature. Uhland, one of the most typical of the romantic poets, fed, in his youthful years, on 'old books and chronicles with wonderful pictures, descriptions of travel in lands where the inhabitants had but one eye, placed in the centre of the forehead, and where there were men with horses' feet and cranes' necks, also a great work with gruesome engravings of the Spanish wars in the Netherlands.' * When he looked out on the streets he saw Austrian or French soldiers moving through the town and realized that there was an outside world of romantic passions and great issues—a thing Schubert never realized. Even then he was filled with patriotic fervor and his beloved Germanic folk-literature became an expression of it. In 1806-08 appeared Arnim and Brentano's *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, a collection of German folk poetry of all sorts—mostly taken down by

* 'Uhland's Life,' by his widow.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

word of mouth from the people—which did for Germany what Percy's 'Reliques' had done for England. Under this stimulus the German romantic movement became, in Heine's words, 'a reawakening of the poetry of the Middle Ages, as it had manifested itself in its songs, paintings, and architecture.'* placed at the service of the national awakening.

But patriotic fervor was the 'underground meaning' of the romantic movement. This hardly penetrated to Schubert. He saw in it only his beautiful songs and the inspiration of immortal longings awakened by 'old books and chronicles with wonderful pictures.' He had at his disposal a wonderful lyrical literature. First of all Goethe, originator of so much that is rich in modern German life; Rückert and Chamisso, and Müller, singers of the personal sentiments; Körner, the soldier poet, and Uhland, spokesman for the people and apologist for the radical wing of the liberal political movement; Wieland and Herder; and, in the last months of his life, Heine, ultra-lyricist, satirist, and cosmopolite.

From this field Schubert's instinct selected the purely lyrical, without regard to its tendency, with little critical discrimination of any sort. Thanks to his fertility, he included in his list of songs all the best lyric poets of his time. And to these poets he owed what was new and historically significant in the spirit of his musical output. This new element, reduced to its simplest terms, was the emotional lyrical quality at its purest. His musical training was almost exclusively classical, so far as it was anything at all. He knew and adored first Mozart and later Beethoven. But these composers would not have given him his wonderful gift of expressive song. And since it is never sufficient to lay any specific quality purely to inborn genius (innate genius is, on the whole, undifferentiated and not specific), we

* Heine: *Die romantische Schule*.

FRANZ SCHUBERT

must lay it, in Schubert's case, to the romantic poets. From the earliest years of his creative (as opposed to his merely imitative) life, he set their songs to music; he found nothing else so congenial; inevitably the spontaneous song called forth by these lyrics dominated his musical thinking. The romantic poets had taught him to create from the heart rather than from the intelligence.

Franz Schubert was born at Lichtenthal, a suburb of Vienna, in 1797, one of a family of nineteen children, of whom ten survived childhood. Instructed in violin playing by his father—nearly all German schoolmasters played the violin—he evinced an astounding musical talent at a very early age, was taken as boy soprano into the Vienna court chapel, and instructed in the musical choir school—the *Convict*—receiving lessons from Rucziszka and Salieri. At sixteen, when his voice changed, he left the *Convict* and during three years assisted his father as elementary school teacher in Lichtenthal. But in the meantime he composed no less than eight operas, four masses, and other church works and a number of songs. Not till 1817 was he enabled, through the generosity of his friend Schober, to devote himself entirely to music; never in his short life was he in a position to support himself adequately by means of his art: as musical tutor in the house of Esterházy in Hungary (1818-1824) he was provided for only during the summer months; Salieri's post as vice-kapellmeister in Vienna as well as the conductorship of the Kärntnerthor Theatre he failed to secure. Hence, he was dependent upon the meagre return from his compositions and the assistance of a few generous friends—singers, like Schönstein and Vogl, who made his songs popular. Narrow as his sphere of action was the circle of those who appreciated him. Public recognition he secured only in his last year, with a single concert of his own compositions. He died in 1828, at

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

the age of thirty-one. During that short span his productivity was almost incredible; operas, mostly forgotten (their texts alone would make them impossible) and some lost choral works of extraordinary merit; symphonies, some of which rank among the masterpieces of all times; fourteen string quartets and many other chamber works; piano sonatas of deep poetic content, and shorter piano pieces (*Moments musicaux*, impromptus, etc.) poured from his magic pen, but especially songs, to the number of 650, a great many of which are immortal. Schubert was able to publish only a portion of this prodigious product during his lifetime. Much of it has since his death been resurrected from an obscure bundle of assorted music found among his effects, and at his death valued at 10 florins (\$2.12)! A perfect stream of posthumous symphonies, operas, quartets, songs, every sort of music appeared year after year till the world began to doubt their authenticity. Schumann, upon his visit to Vienna in 1838, still discovered priceless treasures, including the great C major symphony.

As a man Schubert never got far away from the peasant stock from which he came. He was casual and careless in his life; a Bohemian rather from shiftlessness than from high spirits; content to work hard and faithfully, and demanding nothing more than a seidel of beer and a bosom companion for his diversion. He was never intellectual, and what we might call his culture came only from desultory reading. He was as sensitive as a child and as trusting and warm-hearted. His musical education had never been consistently pursued; his fertility was so great that he preferred dashing off a new piece to correcting an old one. Hence his work tends to be prolix, and, in the more academic sense, thin. Toward the end of his life, however, he felt his technical shortcomings, and at the time of his death had made arrangements for lessons in counter-

FRANZ SCHUBERT

point from Sechter. It is fair to say that we possess only Schubert's early works. Though they are some 1,800 in number, they are only a fragment of what he would have produced had he reached three-score and ten. By the age at which he died Wagner had not written 'Tannhäuser' nor Beethoven his Third Symphony.

In point of natural genius no composer, excepting possibly Mozart, excelled him. His rich and pure vein of melody is unmatched in all the history of music. We have already pointed out the strong influence of the great Viennese classics upon Schubert. In forming an estimate of his style we must recur to a comparison with them. We think immediately of Mozart when we consider the utter spontaneity, the inevitableness of Schubert's melodies, his inexhaustible well of inspiration, the pure loveliness, the limpid clarity of his phrases. Yet in actual subject matter he is more closely connected to Beethoven—it is no detraction to say that in his earlier period he freely borrowed from him, for, in Mr. Hadow's words, Schubert always 'wears his rue with a difference.' Again, in his procedure, in his harmonic progression and the rhythmic structure of his phrases, he harks back to Haydn; the abruptness of his modulations, the clear-cut directness of his articulation, the folk-flavor of some of his themes are closely akin to that master's work. But out of all this material he developed an idiom as individual as any of his predecessors'.

The essential quality which distinguishes that idiom is lyricism. Schubert is the lyricist *par excellence*. More than any of the Viennese masters was he imbued with the poetic quality of ideas. His musical phrases are poetic where Mozart's are purely musical. They have the force of words, they seem even translations of words, they are the equivalents of one certain poetic sentiment and no other; they fit one particular mood

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

only. In the famous words of Lizst, Schubert was *le musicien le plus poète qui fût jamais* (the most poetic musician that ever lived). We may go further. Granting that Mozart, too, was a poetic musician, Schubert was a musical poet. What literary poet does he resemble? Hadow compares him to Keats; a German would select Heine. For Heine had all of that simplicity, that unalterable directness which we can never persuade ourselves was the result of intellectual calculation or of technical skill; he is so artless an artist that we feel his phrases came to him ready-made, a perfect gift from heaven, which suffered no criticism, no alteration or improvement.

Schubert died but one year after Beethoven, a circumstance which alone gives us reason to dispute his place among the romantic composers. He himself would hardly have placed himself among them, for he did not relish even the romantic vagaries of Beethoven at the expense of pure beauty, though he worshipped that master in love and awe. 'It must be delightful and refreshing for the artist,' he wrote of his teacher Salieri upon the latter's jubilee, 'to hear in the compositions of his pupils simple nature with its expression, free from all oddity, such as is now dominant with most musicians and for which we have to thank one of our greatest German artists almost exclusively. . . .' Yet, as Langhans says, 'not to deny his inclination to elegance and pure beauty, he was able to approach the master who was unattainable in these departments (orchestral and chamber music) more closely than any one of his contemporaries and successors.' * Yes, and in some respects he was able to go beyond. 'With less general power of design than his great predecessors he surpasses them all in the variety of his color. His harmony is extraordinarily rich and original, his modula-

* Wilhelm Langhans: 'The History of Music,' Eng. transl. by J. H. Cornell, 1886.

tions are audacious, his contrasts often striking and effective and he has a peculiar power of driving his point home by sudden alterations in volume of sound.' * In the matter of form he could allow himself more freedom—he could freight his sonatas with a poetic message that stretched it beyond conventional bounds, for his audience was better prepared to comprehend it. And while his polyphony is never like that of Beethoven, or even Mozart, his sensuous harmonic style, crystal clear and gorgeously varied, with its novel and enchanting use of the enharmonic change and its subtle interchange of the major and minor modes, supplies a richness and variety of another sort and in itself constitutes an advance, the starting point of harmonic development among succeeding composers. By these tokens and 'by a peculiar quality of imagination in his warmth, his vividness and impatience of formal restraint, he points forward to the generation that should rebel against all formality.' But, above all, by his lyric quality. He is lyric where Beethoven is epic; and lyricism is the very essence of romanticism. Whatever his stature as a symphonist, as a composer in general, his position as song writer is unique and of more importance than any other. Here he creates a new form, not by a change of principle, by a theoretically definable process, but 'a free artistic creative activity, such as only a true genius, a rich personality not forced by a scholastic education into definitely limited tracks, could accomplish.'

The particular merit of this accomplishment of Schubert will have more detailed discussion in the following chapter. But, aside from that, he touched no form that he did not enrich. By his sense of beauty, unaided by scholarship or the inspiration of great deeds in the outer world, he made himself one of the great pioneers of modern music. Together with Weber,

* *Ibid.*

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

he set the spirit for modern piano music and invented some of its most typical forms. His *Moments Musicaux*, impromptus, and pieces in dance forms gave the impulse to an entire literature—the *Phantasiestücke* of Schumann, the songs without words of Mendelssohn are typical examples. His quartets and his two great symphonies (the C major and the unfinished B minor) have a beauty hardly surpassed in instrumental music, and are inferior to the greatest works of their kind only in grasp of form. His influence on posterity is immeasurable. Not only in the crisp rhythms and harmonic sonorities of Schumann, in the sensuous melodies and gracious turns of Mendelssohn, but in their progeny, from Brahms to Grieg, there flows the musical essence of Schubert. Who can listen to the slow movement of the mighty Brahms C minor symphony without realizing the depth of that well of inspiration, the universality of the idiom created by the last of the Vienna masters?

Schubert's music was indeed the swan-song of the Viennese period of the history of music, and it is remarkable that a voice from that city, more than any other in Europe bound to the old régime, should have sung of the future of music. But so Schubert sang from a city of the past. Meanwhile new voices were raised from other lands, strong with the promise of the time.

III

The great significance of Weber in musical history is that he may fairly be called the first German national composer. Preceding composers of the race had been German in the sense that they were of German blood and their works were paid for by Germans, and also in that their music usually had certain characteristics of the German nature. But they were not consciously

WEBER AND THE GERMAN REAWAKENING

national in the aggressive sense. Weber's works are the first musical expression of a German patriotism, cultivating what is most deeply and typically German, singing German unity of feeling and presenting something like a solid front against foreign feelings and art. But we are too apt to wave away such a statement as a mere phrase. At a distance we are too liable to suppose that a great art can come into being in response to a mere sentimental idea. But German patriotism was a passion which was fought for by the best brains and spirits of the time. It was in the heat of conflict that Weber's music acquired its deep meaning and its spiritual intensity.

To understand the state of affairs we must again go back to the French Revolution. Germany was at the end of the eighteenth century more rigidly mediæval than any other European country, save possibly Russia and parts of Italy. The German patriot Stein thus described the condition of Mecklenburg in a letter written in 1802: 'I found the aspect of the country as cheerless as its misty northern sky; great estates, much of them in pastures or fallow; an extremely thin population; the entire laboring class under the yoke of serfage; stretches of land attached to solitary ill-built farm houses; in short, a monotony, a dead stillness, spreading over the whole country; an absence of life and activity that quite overcame my spirits. The home of the Mecklenburg noble, who weighs like a load on his peasants instead of improving their condition, gives me the idea of the den of some wild beast, who devastates everything about him and surrounds himself with the silence of the grave.' If Stein was perhaps inclined to be pessimistic in his effort to arouse German spirits, it is because he has in his mind's eye the possibility of better things, and the actual superiority of conditions in France and England. Most observers of the time viewed conditions with indifference. Goethe

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

showed little or no patriotism; 'Germany is not a nation,' he said curtly.

After the peace of Lunéville and the Diet of Ratisbon the greater part of Germany fell under Napoleon's influence. The German people showed no concern at thus passing under the control of the French. The German states were nothing but the petty German courts. Fyffe * humorously describes the process of political reorganization which the territory underwent in 1801: 'Scarcely was the Treaty of Lunéville signed when the whole company of intriguers who had touted at Rastadt posted off to the French capital with their maps and their money-bags, the keener for the work when it became known that by common consent the free cities of the empire were now to be thrown into the spoil. Talleyrand and his confidant, Mathieu, had no occasion to ask for bribes, or to maneuver for the position of arbiters in Germany. They were overwhelmed with importunities. Solemn diplomatists of the old school toiled up four flights of stairs to the lodging of the needy secretary, or danced attendance at the parties of the witty minister. They hugged Talleyrand's poodle; they played blind-man's buff and belabored each other with handkerchiefs to please his little niece. The shrewder of them fortified their attentions with solid bargains, and made it their principal care not to be outbidden at the auction. Thus the game was kept up as long as there was a bishopric or a city in the market.'

Such were the issues which controlled the national destiny of Germany in 1801. Napoleon unintentionally gave the impetus to the German resurgence by forcing some vestige of rational organization upon the land. The internal condition of the priest-ruled districts was generally wretched; heavy ignorance, beggary, and intolerance kept life down to an inert monotony. The free cities, as a rule, were sunk in debt; the manage-

* Fyffe: 'History of Modern Europe,' Vol. I.

WEBER AND THE GERMAN REAWAKENING

ment of their affairs had become the perquisite of a few lawyers and privileged families. The new régime centralized administration, strengthened the financial system, and relieved the peasants of the most intolerable of their burdens, and thus gave them a stake in the national welfare.

Five years later Napoleon helped matters further by a rule of insolence and national oppression that was intolerable to any educated persons except the ever servile Prussian court. The battle of Jena and the capture of Berlin had thrown all Prussia into French hands, and the court into French alliances. Stein protested and attempted to arouse the people. He met with indifference. Then came more indignities. Forty thousand French soldiers permanently quartered on Prussian soil taught the common people the bitterness of foreign domination. When the Spanish resistance of 1808 showed the weakness of Napoleon a band of statesmen and patriots, including the poet Arndt, the philosopher Fichte and the theologian Schleiermacher, renewed their campaign for national feeling, the only thing that could put into German armies the spirit needful for Napoleon's overthrow. In all this the House of Hohenzollern and the ministers of the court of Potsdam played a most inglorious rôle. The patriots were frowned upon or openly prosecuted. Schill, a patriotic army officer, who attempted to attack the French on his own account, was denounced from Berlin. Even when Napoleon was returning defeated from Moscow, the jealousies of the court stood out to the last against the spontaneous national uprising. Finally Frederick William, the Prussian king, made a virtue of necessity and entered the field in the name of German unity.

But the nationalist movement had become a constitutionalist, even a republican, movement. The Ger-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

man soldiers, returning home victorious after the battle of Leipzig, received the expected promise of a constitution from Frederick William. After two years of delay the promise had been practically withdrawn. Only the examples of Weimar, Bavaria, and Baden, together with the propaganda of the liberals, kept the issue alive and growing, until it came to partial culmination in 1848.

It was into this Napoleonic situation that Weber was thrown in his most impressionable years. On a little vacation trip from Prague he went to Berlin and saw the return of Frederick William and the victorious Prussians from Paris after the battle of Leipzig. The national frenzy took hold of him and, at his next moment of leisure, he composed settings to some of Körner's war songs, including the famous *Du Schwert an meiner Linken*, which made him better known and loved throughout Germany than all his previous works. To this day these songs are sung by the German singing societies, and nothing in all the literature of music is more truly German. To celebrate Waterloo he composed a cantata, *Kampf und Sieg*, which in the next two years was performed in a number of the capitals and secured to Weber his nationalist reputation. It was well that he was thus brilliantly and openly known at the time; he needed this reputation five years later when his work took on a changed significance.

Carl Maria Freiherr von Weber was born at Eutin, Oldenburg, in 1786, of Austrian parentage, into what we should call the 'decayed gentility.' His father was from time to time 'retired army officer,' director of a theatre band, and itinerant theatre manager. His mother, who died when he was seven, was an opera singer. The boy, under his stepbrother's proddings, became something of a musician, and, when left to his own resources, a prodigy. His travellings were incessant, his

CARL MARIA VON WEBER

studies a patchwork.* Nevertheless he had success on his infantile concert tours, and showed marked talent in his early compositions. At the age of thirteen he wrote an opera, *Das Waldmädchen*, which was performed in many theatres of Germany, and even in Russia. From the age of sixteen to eighteen he was kapellmeister at the theatre in Breslau. After some two years of uncertainty and rather fast life he became private secretary to the Duke Ludwig of Württemberg. His life became faster. He became involved in debts. Worse, he became involved in intrigue. The king was suspicious. Weber was arrested and thrown into prison. He was cleared of the charges against him, but was banished from the kingdom. Realizing that the way of the transgressor is hard, Weber now devoted himself to serious living and the making of music. Then followed three undirected years, filled with literature and reading, as well as music. In 1812, during a stay in Berlin, he amused himself by teaching a war-song of his to the Brandenburg Brigade stationed in the barracks. No doubt his life in the court of Stuttgart had shown him the insincerity of aristocratic pretensions and had turned his thoughts already to the finer things about him—that popular liberal feeling which just now took the form of military enthusiasm. In the following year he accepted the post of kapellmeister of the German theatre at Prague, with the difficult problem of reorganizing the opera, but with full authority to do it at his best. From this time on his life became steady and illumined with serious purpose. He brought to the theatre a rigor of discipline which it had not known before, and produced a brilliant series of German operas.

Early in 1817 he accepted a position as kapellmeister

* He was a pupil first of his stepbrother, Fridolin, of Heuschkel in Hildburghausen, of Michael Haydn in Salzburg (1797), of Kalcher in theory, and Valesi in singing.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

of the German (as opposed to the Italian) opera of Dresden. It was a challenge to his best powers, for the German opera of Dresden was practically non-existent. For a century Italian opera had held undisputed sway, with French a respected second. The light German *singspiele*, the chief representative of German opera, were performed by second-rate artists. All the prestige and influence of the city was for the Italian and French. For the court of Dresden, like that of Berlin half a century before, was thoroughly Frenchified. The king of Saxony owed his kingdom to Napoleon and aristocratic Germans still regarded what was German as mean and common.

But there was a more significant reason for Weber's peculiar position, a reason that gave the color to his future importance. What was patriotic was, as we have seen, in the eyes of the court liberal and dangerous. To foster German opera was accordingly to run the risk of fostering anti-monarchical sentiments. If, just at this time, the court of Dresden chose to inaugurate a separate German opera, it was as a less harmful concession to the demands of the populace, and more particularly as a sort of anti-Austrian move which crystallized just at this time in opposition to Metternich's reactionism. But, though the court wished a German opera, it felt no particular sympathy for it. In the preliminary negotiations it tried to insist, until met with Weber's firm attitude, that its German kapellmeister should occupy a lower rank than Morlacchi, the Italian director. And, as Weber's fame as a German nationalist composer grew, the court of Dresden was one of the last to recognize it. In the face of such lukewarmness Weber established the prestige of the German opera, and wrote *Der Freischütz*, around which all German nationalist sentiment centred. But to understand why *Freischütz* occupied this peculiar position we must once more turn back to history.

DER FREISCHÜTZ

‘On the 18th of October, 1817,’ says the ever-enter-taining Fyffe, ‘the students of Jena, with deputations from all the Protestant universities of Germany, held a festival at Eisenach, to celebrate the double anniversary of the Reformation and of the battle of Leipzig. Five hundred young patriots, among them scholars who had been decorated for bravery at Waterloo, bound their brows with oak-leaves and assembled within the venerable hall of Luther’s Wartburg castle, sang, prayed, preached, and were preached to, dined, drank to German liberty, the jewel of life, to Dr. Martin Luther, the man of God, and to the grand duke of Saxe-Weimar; then descended to Eisenach, fraternized with the *Landsturm* in the market-place, and attended divine service in the parish church without mishap. In the evening they edified the townspeople with gymnastics, which were now the recognized symbol of German vigor, and lighted a great bonfire on the hill opposite the castle. Throughout the official part of the ceremony a reverential spirit prevailed; a few rash words were, however, uttered against promise-breaking kings, and some of the hardier spirits took advantage of the bonfire to consign to the flames, in imitation of Luther’s dealing with the Pope’s Bull, a quantity of what they deemed un-German and illiberal writings. Among these was Schmalz’s pamphlet (which attacked the *Tugendbund* and other liberal German political institutions of the Napoleonic period). They also burnt a soldier’s straitjacket, a pigtail, and a corporal’s cane—emblems of the military brutality of past times which was now being revived in Westphalia.’

The affair stirred up great alarm among the courts of Europe, an alarm out of all proportion to its true significance. The result—more espionage and suppression of free speech. ‘With a million of men under arms,’ adds Fyffe, ‘the sovereigns who had overthrown Napoleon trembled because thirty or forty journalists

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

and professors pitched their rhetoric rather too high, and because wise heads did not grow upon schoolboys' shoulders.' The liberal passion, in short, was there, burning for a medium of expression. It was not allowed to appear on the surface. The result was that it must look for expression in some indirect way—in parables; in short, in works of art. In such times art takes on a most astonishing parallel of double meanings. The phenomenon happened in striking form some forty years later in Russia, when the growing and rigidly suppressed demand for the liberation of the serfs found expression in Turgenieff's 'Memoirs of a Sportsman,' which is called 'the Russian "Uncle Tom's Cabin."' The book was a mere series of literary sketches, telling various incidents among the country people during a season's hunting. It showed not a note of passion, contained not a shadow of a political reference. There was no ground on which the censor could prohibit it, nor did the censor probably realize its other meaning. But it proved the storm centre of the liberal agitation. And so it has been with Russian literature for the last half century; those whose hearts understood could read deep between the lines.

And this was the position of *Der Freischütz*. The most reactionary government could hardly prohibit the performance of a fanciful tale of a shooting contest in which the devil was called upon to assist with magic. But it represented what was German in opposition to what was French or Italian. Its story came from the old and deep-rooted German legends; its characters were German in all their ways; the institutions it showed were old Germanic; its characters were the peasants and the people of the lower class, who were, in the propaganda of the time, the heart of the German nation. And, lastly, its melodies were of the very essence of German folk-song, the institution, above all else save only the German language, which

DER FREISCHÜTZ

made German hearts beat in tune. The opera was first performed in Berlin, at the opening of the new court theatre, on the sixth anniversary of the battle of Waterloo—that is in 1821. The success was enormous and within a year nearly every stage in Germany had mounted the work. It was even heard in New York within a few months. At every performance the enthusiasm was beyond all bounds, and, after nine months of this sort of thing, Weber wrote in his diary in Vienna: ‘Greater enthusiasm there cannot be; and I tremble to think of the future, for it is scarcely possible to rise higher than this.’ As for the court of Dresden, it realized slowly and grudgingly that it had in its pay one of the great composers of the world.

After *Freischütz* it was indeed ‘scarcely possible to rise higher,’ but Weber attempted a more ambitious task in a purely musical way in his next opera, *Euryanthe*, which was a glorification of the romanticism of the age—that of Jean Paul and E. T. A. Hoffmann, who represented to the Germans of the time vigor of the imagination and the freedom of the individual. Both *Euryanthe* and *Oberon*, which followed it, are very fine, but they could not repeat the success of *Der Freischütz*, chiefly because Weber could not find another *Freischütz* libretto. The composer died in England on June 4, 1826, after conducting the first performances of *Oberon* at Covent Garden.

Personally we see Weber as a man of the world, yet always with a bit of aristocratic reserve. He had been one of a wandering theatrical troupe, had played behind the scenes of a theatre, had known financial ups and downs, had lived on something like familiar terms with gentlemen and ladies of the court, had been a *roué* with the young bloods of degree, had intrigued and been the victim of intrigue, had been a concert

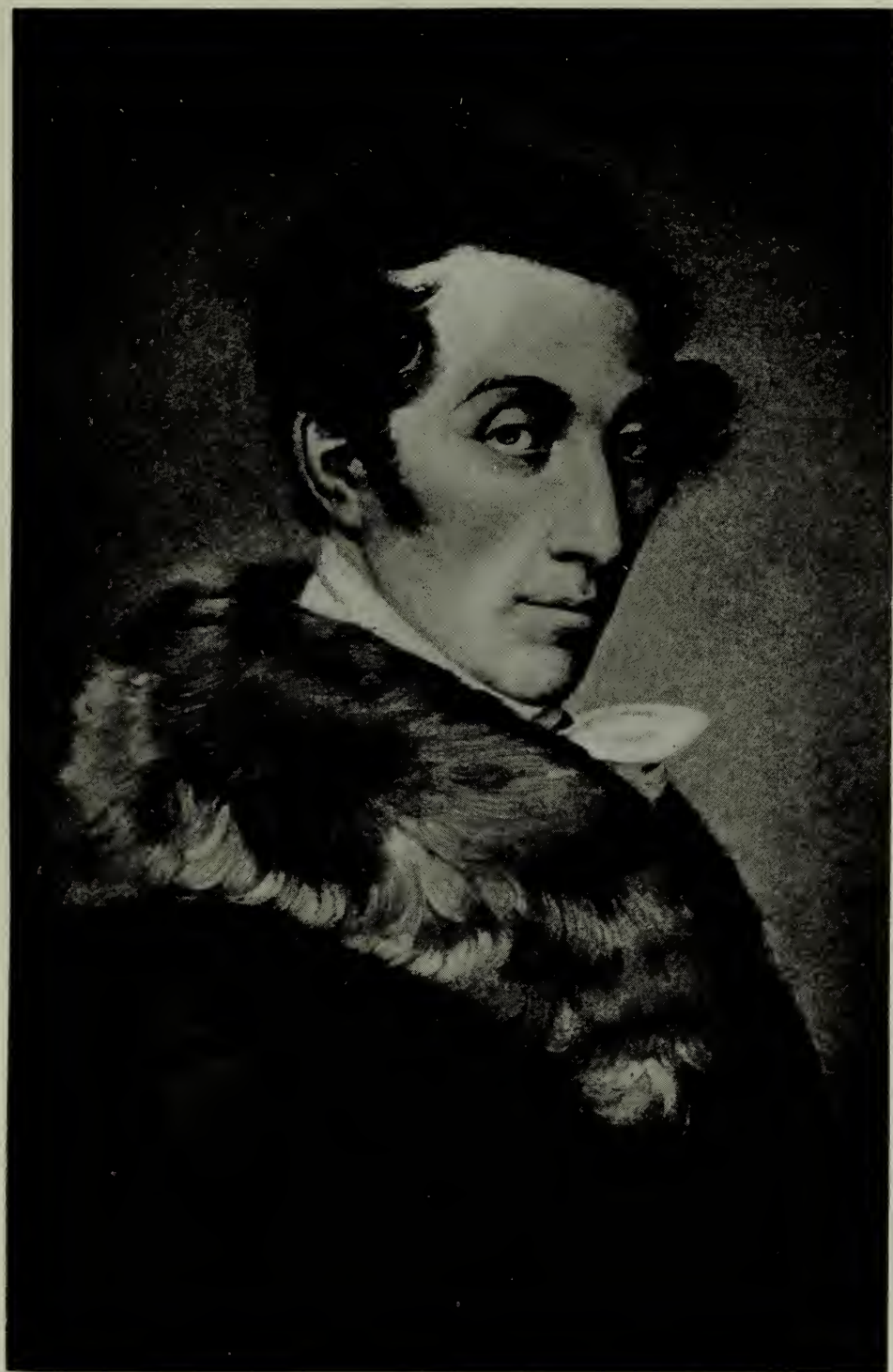
A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

pianist with the outward success and the social stigma of a virtuoso musician, had been a successful executive in responsible positions, had played the litterateur and written a fashionable novel, had been a devoted husband and father, and had felt the meaning of a great social movement. Certainly Weber was the first of that distinguished line of musicians who cultivated literature with marked talent and effect; his letters reveal the practised observer and the literary craftsman, and his criticisms of music, of which he wrote many at a certain period, have the insight of Schumann, with something more than his verve. Finally, he was the first great composer who was also a distinguished director; his work at Prague and Dresden was hardly less a creative feat than *Der Freischütz*.

Musically Weber has many a distinction. He is the acknowledged founder of German opera (though Mozart with *Zauberflöte* may be regarded as his forerunner), and the man who made German music aggressively national. Wagner, as we know him, would hardly have been possible without Weber. Weber is the father of the romanticists in his emphasis upon the imagination, in his ability to give pictorial and definite emotional values to his music. It is only a slight exaggeration of the truth to call him the father of modern instrumentation; his use of orchestral timbres for sensuous or dramatic effects, so common nowadays, was unprecedented in his time. With Schubert he is the father of modern pianoforte music; himself a virtuoso, he understood the technical capacities of the piano, and developed them, both in the classical forms and in the shorter forms which were carried to such perfection by Schumann, with the romantic glow of a new message. He is commonly regarded as deficient in the larger forms, but in those departments (and they were many) where he was at his best there

Carl Maria von Weber

Carl Gustav von Weber



THE PARIS OF 1830

are few musicians who have worked more finely than he.

IV

The scene now shifts to Paris, a city unbelievably frenzied and complex, the Paris that gives the tone to a good half of the music of the romantic period.

'As I finished my cantata (*Sardanapalus*),' writes Berlioz in his 'Memoirs,' 'the Revolution broke out and the Institute was a curious sight. Grapeshot rattled on the barred doors, cannon balls shook the façade, women screamed, and, in the momentary pauses, the interrupted swallows took up their sweet, shrill cry. I hurried over the last pages of my cantata and on the 29th was free to maraud about the streets, pistol in hand, with the "blessed riff-raff," as Barbier said. I shall never forget the look of Paris during those few days. The frantic bravery of the gutter-snipe, the enthusiasm of the men, the calm, sad resignation of the Swiss and Royal Guards, the odd pride of the mob in being "masters of Paris and looting nothing."'

This was Paris in Berlioz's and Liszt's early years there. In Paris at or about this time were living Victor Hugo, Stendhal, de Vigny, Balzac, Chateaubriand, de Musset, Lamartine, Dumas the elder, Heine, Sainte-Beuve, and George Sand among the poets, dramatists, and novelists; Guizot and Thiers among the historians; Auguste Comte, Joseph le Maistre, Lamennais, Proudhon, and Saint-Simon among the political philosophers. It is hard to recall any other city at any other time in history (save only the Athens of the Peloponnesian War) which had such a vigorous intellectual and artistic life. Thanks to the centralization effected by Napoleon, thanks to the tradition of free speech among the French, the centre of Europe had shifted from Vienna to Paris.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

A few months before the political revolution of July, 1830, occurred the outbreak of one of the historic artistic revolutions of the capital. Victor Hugo's 'Hernani,' on which the young romantic school centred its hopes, was first performed on February 25, before an audience that took it as a matter of life and death. The performance was permitted, so tradition says, in the expectation that the play would discredit the romantic school once and for all. The principal actress, Mlle. Mars, was outraged by Hugo's imagery, and refused point blank to call Firmin her 'lion, superb and generous.' A goodly *claque*, drawn from the ateliers and salons, brought the play to an overwhelming triumph, and for fifteen years the dominance of the romantic school was indisputable.

This romantic school was somewhat parallel to that of Germany, and, in a general way, took the same inspiration. The literary influences, outside of the inevitable Rousseau and Chateaubriand of France itself, were chiefly Grimm's recensions of old tales, Schiller's plays, Schlegel's philosophical and historical works; Goethe's *Faust*, as well as our old friend *Werther*; Herder's 'Thoughts on the Philosophy of History'; Shakespeare and Dante as a matter of course; Byron and Sir Walter Scott; and any number of collections of mediæval tales and poems, foreign as well as French. This much the French and German romanticists had in common. But the movement had scarcely any political tinge, though political influences developed out of it. By a curious inversion the literary radicals were the legitimists and political conservatives, and the classicists the political revolutionists—perhaps a remnant of the Revolution, when the republicans were turning to the art and literature of Greece for ideals of 'purity.'

For the French intellectuals had perhaps had enough

FRENCH ROMANTICISM

of political life, whereas the Germans were starved for it. At any rate, the French romanticists were almost wholly concerned with artistic canons. To them romanticism meant freedom of the imagination, the demolishing of classical forms and traditional rules, the mixing of the genres 'as they are mixed in life'; the rendering of the language more sensuous and flexible, and, above all, the expression of the subjective and individual point of view. They had a great cult for the historic, and their plays are filled with local color (real or supposed) of the time in which their action is laid. They supposed themselves to be returning to real life, using everyday details and painting men as they are. In particular they made their work more intimately emotional; they substituted the image for the metaphor, and the pictorial word for the abstract word. This last fact is of greatest importance in its influence on romantic music. The painting of the time, though by no means so radical in technique as that of music, showed the influences of the great social overturning. Subjects were taken from contemporary or recent times—the doings of the French in the Far East, the campaigns of Napoleon, or from the natural scenery round about Paris, renouncing the 'adjusted landscape' of the classicists with a ruined temple in the foreground. Scenes from the Revolution came into painting, and the drama of the private soldier or private citizen gained human importance. Géricault emphasized sensuous color as against the severe classicist David. The leader, and perhaps the most typical member, of the romantic school was Delacroix, a defender of the art of the Middle Ages as against the exaggerated cult of the Greeks. He took his subjects 'from Dante, Shakespeare, Byron (heroes of the literary romanticism); from the history of the Crusades, of the French Revolution, and of the Greek revolt against the Turks.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

He painted with a feverish energy of life and expression, a deep and poetic sense of color. His bold, ample technique thrust aside the smooth timidities of the imitators and prepared the way for modern impressionism.*

But there was still another result of the suppression of political tendencies in French romantic literature. In looking to the outer world for inspiration (as every artist must) the writers of the time, turning from contemporary politics, inevitably saw before their eyes Napoleon the Great, now no longer Corsican adventurer and personal despot, but national hero and creator of magnificent epics. The young people of this time did not remember the miseries of the Napoleonic wars; they remembered only their largeness and glory. Fifteen years after the abdication of Napoleon the inspiration of Napoleon came to literary expression. It was a passion for bigness. Victor Hugo's professed purpose was to bring the whole of life within the compass of a work of art. Every emotion was raised to its *n*th power. Hernani passes from one cataclysmic experience to another; the whole of life seems to depend on the blowing of a hunting horn. The painting of the time, under Géricault, Delacroix, and Delaroche, was grandiose and pompous. The stage of the theatre was filled with magnificent pictures. A nation comes to insurrection in *William Tell*; Catholicism and Protestantism grapple to the death in *Les Huguenots*. But not only extensively but intensively this cult of bigness was developed. Victor Hugo sums up the whole of life in a phrase. The musicians had caught the trick; Meyerbeer was of Victor Hugo's stature in some things. He gets the epic clang in a single couplet, as in the 'Blessing of the Poignards' or in the G flat section of the fourth act duet from *Les Huguenots*. And this heroic

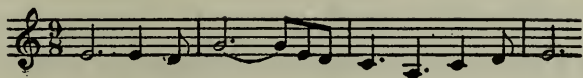
* Reinach's 'Apollo.'

FRANZ LISZT

quality came to its finest expression in Liszt, some of whose themes, like that of Tasso



or that of *Les Préludes*



seem to say, *Arma virumque cano*.

V

If ever a man was made to respond to this Paris of 1830 it was Franz Liszt. Heroic virtuosity was a solid half of its Credo. Victor Hugo, as a virtuoso of language, must be placed beside the greatest writers of all time—Homer, Shakespeare, Dante, and whom else? No less can be said for Liszt in regard to the piano. He was born in 1811 in Raiding, Hungary. He is commonly supposed to be partly Hungarian in blood, although German biographers deny this, asserting that the name originally had the common German form of List. Almost before he could walk he was at the piano. At the age of nine he appeared in public. And at the age of twelve he was a pianist of international reputation. How such virtuosity came to be, no one can explain. Most things in music can be traced in some degree to their causes. But in such a case as this the miracle can be explained neither by his instruction nor by his parentage nor by any external conditions. It is one of the things that must be set down as a pure gift of Heaven. Prominent noblemen guaranteed his further education and, after a few months of study in Vienna, under Czerny and Salieri, he and his father went to Paris, which was to be the centre of his life for some twenty years. He was the sensation of polite

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

Paris within a few months after his arrival and he presently had pupils of noble blood at outrageous prices. Two years after his arrival—that is, when he was fourteen—a one-act operetta of his, *Don Sanche*, was performed at the Académie Royale. Two years later his father died and he was thrown on his own resources as teacher and concert pianist. Then, in 1830, he fell sick following an unhappy love affair, and his life was despaired of until, in the words of his mother, ‘he was cured by the sound of the cannon.’

How did the Paris of 1830, and particularly the temper of Parisian life, affect Liszt? ‘Monsieur Mignet,’ he said, ‘teach me all of French literature.’ Here is a new thing in music—a musician who dares take all knowledge to be his province. He writes, about this time: ‘For two weeks my mind and my fingers have been working like two of the damned: Homer, the Bible, Plato, Locke, Byron, Hugo, Lamartine, Chateaubriand, Beethoven, Bach, Hummel, Mozart, Weber are about me. I study them, meditate them, devour them furiously.’ He conceived a huge admiration for Hugo’s *Marion de Lorme* and Schiller’s *Wilhelm Tell*. Be sure, too, that he was busy reading the artistic theories of the romanticists and translating them into musical terms. The revolution of 1830 had immediate concrete results in his music; he sketched a Revolutionary Symphony, part of which later became incorporated into his symphonic poem, *Heroïde Funèbre*. He made a brilliant arrangement of the *Marseillaise* and wrote the first number of his ‘Years of Pilgrimage’ on the insurrection of the workmen at Lyon.

The early manifestations of modern socialistic theory were then in the making—in the cult of Saint-Simon—and Liszt was drawn to them. For many years it was supposed that he was actually a member of the order, though he later denied this. The Saint-Simonians had a concrete scheme of communistic society, and a sort

FRANZ LISZT

of religious metaphysic. This latter, if not the former, impressed Liszt deeply, especially because of the place given to art as expressing the ideal toward which the people—the whole people—would strive. But a still stronger influence over Liszt was that of the revolutionary abbé, Lamennais. Lamennais was a devout Catholic, but, like many of the priesthood during the first revolution, he was also an ardent democrat. He took it as self-evident that religion was for all men, that God is no respecter of persons. He was pained by the rôle of the Catholic Church in the French Revolution—its continual siding with the ministers of despotism, its readiness to give its blessing and its huge moral influence to any reactionary government which would offer it material enrichment. He felt it was necessary—no less in the interest of the Church than in that of the people—that the Catholic Church should be the defender of democracy against reactionary princes. He was doing precisely what such men as G. K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc are trying to do in England today. His influence in Paris was great and he became the rallying point for the liberal party in the Church. Perhaps if his counsel had prevailed the Church would not have become in the people's minds the enemy of all their liberties and would have retained its temporal possessions in the war for Italian unity forty years later. Liszt had always been a Catholic, and in his earlier youth had been prevented from taking holy orders only by his father's express command. Now he found Lamennais' philosophy meat to his soul, and Lamennais saw in him the great artist who was to exemplify to the world his philosophy of art. In 1834 Liszt published in the *Gazette Musicale de Paris* an essay embodying his social philosophy of art.

Several points in this manifesto are of importance in indicating what four years of revolutionary Paris had made of Liszt the artist. Though primarily a vir-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

tuoso, Liszt had been raised above the mere vain delight of exciting admiration in the crowd. He had made up his mind to become a creative artist with all his powers. He had asserted the artist's right to do his own thinking, to be a man in any way he saw fit. He had accepted as gospel the romanticist creed that rules must be broken whenever artistic expression demands it and had imbibed to the full the literary and romantic imagery of the school. He had linked up his virtuoso's sense of the crowd with the only thing that could redeem it and make it an art—the human being's sense of democracy. And he had outlined with great accuracy (so far as his form of speech allowed) the nature of the music which he was later to compose. We can nowhere find a better description of the music of Liszt at its best than Liszt's own description of the future 'humanitarian' music—which partakes 'in the largest possible proportions of the characteristics of both the theatre and the church—dramatic and holy, splendid and simple, solemn and serious, fiery, stormy, and calm.' In this democracy Liszt the virtuoso and Liszt the Catholic find at last their synthesis.

How many purely musical influences operated upon Liszt in these years it is hard to say. We know that he felt the message of Meyerbeer and Rossini (such as it was) and raised it to its noblest form in his symphonic poems—the message of magnificence and high romance. But it is fair to say, also, that he appreciated at its true value every sort of music that came within his range of vision—Schubert's songs, Chopin's exquisite pianistic trceries, Beethoven's symphonies, and the fashionable Italian operas of the day. He arranged an astonishing number and variety of works for the piano, catching with wizard-like certainty the essential beauties of each. But probably the most profound musical influence was that of Berlioz, who seemed the very incarnation of the spirit of 1830. Berlioz's partial

FRANZ LISZT

freeing of the symphonic form, his radical harmony, and, most of all, his use of the *idée fixe* or representative melody (which Liszt later developed in his symphonic poems) powerfully impressed Liszt and came to full fruit ten years later.

One more influence must be recorded for Liszt's early Parisian years. It was that of Paganini, who made his first appearance at the capital in 1831. Here was the virtuoso pure and simple. He excited Liszt's highest admiration and stimulated him to do for the piano what Paganini had done for the violin. In 1826 Liszt had published his first études, showing all that was most characteristic in his piano technique at that time. After Paganini had stormed Paris he arranged some of the violinist's études for the piano, and the advance in piano technique shown between these and the earlier studies is marked.

But Liszt had by this time thought too much and too deeply ever to believe that the technical was the whole or even the most important part of an artist. He appreciates the value of Paganini and the place of technical virtuosity in art, but he writes: 'The form should not sound, but the spirit speak! Then only does the virtuoso become the high priest of art, in whose mouth dead letters assume life and meaning, and whose lips reveal the secrets of art to the sons of men. . . .' Finally, note that, amid all this dogma and cocksureness, Liszt understood with true humility that he was not expressing ultimate truth, that he spoke for art in a transition stage, and was the artistic expression of a transitional culture. 'You accuse me,' he said to the poet Heine, 'of being immature and unstable in my ideas, and as a proof you enumerate the many causes which, according to you, I have embraced with ardor. But this accusation which you bring against me alone, shouldn't it, in justice, be brought against the whole generation? Are we not unstable in our peculiar situa-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

tion between a past which we reject and a future which we do not yet understand?' Thus revolutionary Paris had made of Liszt a conscious instrument in the transition of music.

For some ten years Liszt remained the concert pianist. His concert tours took him all over Europe, 'like a wandering gypsy.' He even dreamed of coming to America. In 1840 he went to Hungary and visited his birthplace. He rode in a coach, thus fulfilling, in the minds of the villagers, the prophecy of an old gypsy in his youth, that he should return 'in a glass carriage.' In his book, 'The Gypsies and Their Music,' he gives a highly colored and delightful account of how he was received by the gypsies, how he spent a night in their camp, how he was accompanied on his way by them and serenaded until he was out of sight. The trip made a lasting impression on his mind. He had heard once more the gypsy tunes which had so thrilled him in his earliest childhood, and the Hungarian Rhapsodies were the result.

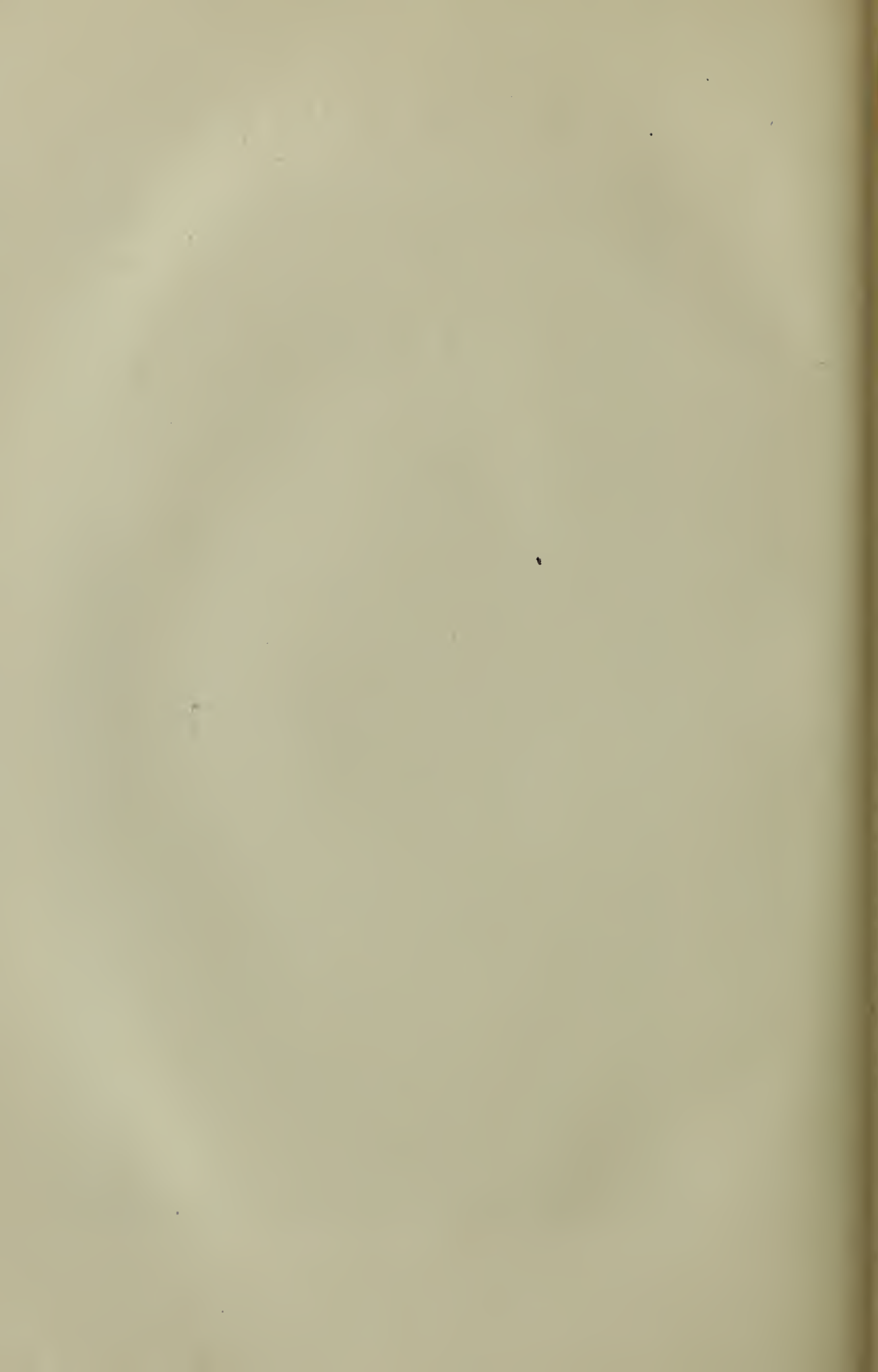
In 1833, in Paris, he was introduced to the Countess d'Agoult, and between the two there sprang up a violent attachment. They lived together for some ten years, concerning which Liszt's biographer, Chantavoine, says bluntly, 'the first was the happiest.' They had three children, one of them the wife of the French statesman, Émile Ollivier, and another the wife of von Bülow and later of Richard Wagner. Eventually they separated.

In 1842 Liszt was invited by the grand duke of Weimar to conduct a series of concerts each year in the city of Goethe and Schiller. Soon afterward he became director of the court theatre. He gave to Weimar ten years of brilliant eminence, performing, among other works, Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, *Lohengrin*, and 'Flying Dutchman'; Berlioz's *Benvenuto Cellini*; Schumann's *Genoveva* and his scenes from *Manfred*; Schubert's *Alfonso und Estrella*; and Cornelius' 'The

Liszt at the Piano

After a painting by Josef Danhauser





FRANZ LISZT

Barber of Bagdad.' The last work, an attempt to apply Wagnerian principles to comic opera, was received with extreme coldness, and Liszt in disgust gave up his position, leaving Weimar in 1861. But during these years he had composed many of the most important of his works.

From this time until his death at Bayreuth in 1886 he divided his life between Buda-Pesth, Weimar, and Rome. In the 'Eternal City' the religious nature of the man came to full expression and he studied the lore of the Church like a loyal Catholic, being granted the honorary title of Abbé. The revolutionist of 1834 had become the religious mystic. Rome and the magnificent traditions of the Church filled his imagination.

Liszt's compositions may be roughly divided into three periods: first, the piano period, extending from 1826 to 1842; second, the orchestral period, from 1842 to 1860 (mostly during his residence at Weimar); and, third, his choral period, from which date his religious works. The nature of these compositions and their contribution to the development of music will be discussed in succeeding chapters. Here we need only recall a few of their chief characteristics. Of his twelve hundred compositions, some seven hundred are original and the others mostly piano transcriptions of orchestral and operatic works of all sorts. Certainly he wrote too much, and not a little of his work must be set down as trash, or near it. But some of it is of the highest musical quality and was of the greatest importance in musical development. The most typical of modern musical forms—the symphonic poem—is due solely to him. He formulated the theory of it and gave it brilliant exemplification. His mastery of piano technique is, of course, unequalled. He made the piano, on the one hand, a small orchestra, and, on the other, an individual voice. While he by no means developed all the possibilities of the instrument (Chopin and Schu-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

mann contributed more that was of musical value), he extended its range—its *avoirdufois*, one might almost say—as no other musician has done. His piano transcriptions, though somewhat distrusted nowadays, greatly increased the popularity of the instrument, and, in some cases, were the chief means of spreading the reputations of certain composers. His use of the orchestra was hardly less masterful than that of Berlioz and Wagner; in particular he gave full importance to the individuality of instruments and emphasized the sensuous qualities of their tone. More, perhaps, than any other composer, he effected the union of pure music with the poetical or pictorial idea. His use of chromatic harmony was at times as daring as that of Berlioz and antedated that of Wagner, who borrowed richly from him. Only his religious music, among his great works, must be accounted comparatively a failure. He had great hopes, when he went to Rome, of becoming the Palestrina of the modern Church. But the Church would have none of his theatrical religious music, while the public has been little more hospitable.

Intimate biographies of Liszt have succeeded in staining the brilliant colors of the Liszt myth, but, on the whole, no composer who gained a prodigious reputation during his lifetime has lived up to it better, so to speak, after his death. As an unrivalled concert pianist, the one conqueror who never suffered a defeat, he might have become vain and jealous. There is hardly a trace of vanity or jealousy in his nature. His appreciation of other composers was always generous and remarkably just. No amount of difference in school or aim could ever obscure, in his eyes, the real worth of a man. Wagner, Berlioz, and a host of others owed much of their reputation to him. His life at Weimar was one continued crusade on behalf of little known geniuses. His financial generosity was very great; though the income from his concerts was huge he

HECTOR BERLIOZ

never, after 1847, gave a recital for his own benefit. In our more matter-of-fact age much of his musical and verbal rhetoric sounds empty, but through it all the intellectuality and sincerity of the man are unmistakable. On the whole, it is hardly possible to name another composer who possessed at once such a broad culture, such a consistent idealism, and such a high integrity.

VI

In Hector Berlioz (b. 1803 at Côte St. André, Isère) we have one of those few men who is not to be explained by any amount of examination of sources. Only to a small extent was he *specifically* determined by his environment. He is unique in his time and in musical history. He, again, is to be explained only as a gift of Heaven (or of the devil, as his contemporaries thought). In a general way, however, he is very brilliantly to be explained by the Paris of 1830. The external tumult, the breaking of rules, the assertion of individuality, all worked upon his sensitive spirit and dominated his creative genius. He was at bottom a childlike, affectionate man, 'demanding at every moment in his life to love and be loved,' as Romain Rolland says. In Renaissance Florence, we may imagine, he might have been a Fra Angelico, or at least no more bumptious than a Filippo Lippi. It was because he was so delicately sensitive that he became, in the Paris of 1830, a violent revolutionist.

His father was a provincial physician and, like so many other fathers in artistic history, seemed to the end of his days ashamed of the fact that he had a genius for a son. The boy imbibed his first music among the amateurs of his town. He went to Paris to study medicine—because his father would provide him funds for nothing else. He loyally studied his

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

science for a while, but nothing could keep him out of music. Without his father's consent or even knowledge he entered the Conservatory, where he remained at swords' points with the director, Cherubini, who cuts a ridiculous figure in his 'Memoirs.' By hook and crook, and by the generosity of creditors, he managed to live on and get his musical education. His father became partially reconciled when he realized there was nothing else to do. But how Berlioz took to heart the lawlessness of the romantic school! Nothing that was, was right. All that is most typically Gallic—clearness, economy, control—is absent in his youthful work. 'Ah, me!' says he in his 'Memoirs,' 'what was the good God thinking of when He dropped me down in this pleasant land of France?'

The events of his career are not very significant. He had a wild time of shocking people. He organized concerts of his own works, chiefly by borrowing money. After two failures he won the *Prix de Rome*, and hardly reached Italy when he started to leave it on a picaresque errand of sentimental revenge. He fell in love with an English actress, Henriette Smithson, married her when she was *passée* and in debt, and eventually treated her rather shamefully. He gave concerts of his works in France, Germany, England, Russia. He was made curator of the Conservatory library. He was made an officer of the Legion of Honor. He wrote musical articles for the papers. He took life very much to heart. And, from time to time, he wrote musical works, very few of them anything less than masterpieces. That is all. The details of his life make entertaining reading. Very little is significant beyond an understanding of his personal character. He was called the genius without talent. Romain Rolland comes closer when he says, 'Berlioz is the most extreme combination of power of genius with weakness of character.' His power of discovering orchestral timbres is

HECTOR BERLIOZ

only equalled by his power of making enemies. There is no villainy recorded of his life; there are any number of mean things, and any number of wild, irrational things. His artistic sincerity is unquestioned, but it is mingled with any amount of the bad boy's delight in shocking others. Like Schumann, but in his own manner, he made himself a crusader against the Philistines.

Of the unhappiness of his life it is quite sufficient to say that it was his own fault. His creed was the subjective, sentimental creed of the romanticists: 'Sensible people,' he exclaims, 'cannot understand this intensity of being, this actual joy in existing, in dragging from life the uttermost it has to give in height and depth.' He was haunted, too, by the romanticists' passion for bigness. His ideal orchestra, he tells us in his work on Instrumentation, consists of 467 instruments—160 violins, 30 harps, eight pairs of kettle drums, 12 bassoons, 16 horns, and other instruments in similar abundance.

His great importance in the history of music is, of course, his development of the orchestra. No one else has ever observed orchestral possibilities so keenly and used them so surely. His musical ideas, as played on the piano, may sound banal, but when they are heard in the orchestra they become pure magic. He never was a pianist; his virtuosity as a performer was lavished on the flute and guitar. For this reason, perhaps, his orchestral writing is the least pianistic, the most inherently contrapuntal of any of the period.

He was a pioneer in freeing instrumental music from the dominance of traditional forms. Forms may be always necessary, but their *raison d'être*, as Berlioz insisted, should be expressive and not traditional. Berlioz was the first great exponent of program music; Liszt owes an immense amount to him. He was also the first to use in a thorough-going way the *leit-*

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

motif, or the *idée fixe*, as he called it. Not that he developed the theory of the dramatic use of the *leit-motif* as Wagner did, but he made extensive use of the melody expressive of a particular idea or personage. His output was limited, both in range and in quantity, but there are few composers who have had a higher average of excellence throughout their work—always on the understanding that you like his subject-matter. The hearer who does not may intellectually admit his technical mastery of the orchestra, but he will feel that the composer is sounding brass and tinkling cymbals.

VII

Frédéric Chopin was far less influenced by external events than most composers of the time. We have the legend that the C minor *Étude* was written to express his emotions upon hearing of the capture of Warsaw by the Russians in 1831. We hear a good deal (perhaps too much) about the national strain in his music. The national dance rhythms enter into his work, and, to some extent, the national musical idiom, though refined out of any real national expressiveness. Beyond this his music would apparently have been the same, whatever the state of the world at large.

Nor are the events of his life of any particular significance. He was born near Warsaw, in Poland, in 1810, the son of a teacher who later became professor of French in the Lyceum of Warsaw. His father had sufficient funds for his education, and the lad received excellent instruction in music—in composition chiefly—at the Warsaw Conservatory. At nine he appeared as a concert pianist, and frequently thereafter. He was a sensitive child, but hardly remarkable in any way. There are child love affairs to be recorded by careful biographers, with fancied influences on his art. In composition he was not precocious, his Opus 1 appear-

FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN

ing at the age of eighteen. A visit to Vienna in 1829 decided him in his career of professional pianist, and in 1830 he left Warsaw on a grand concert tour. In 1831 he reached Paris, where he lived most of his life thereafter. His Opus 2 was 'announced' to the world by the discerning Schumann, in the famous phrase, 'Hats off, gentlemen. A genius!' In 1837, through Liszt's machinations, he met Madame Dudevant, known to fame by her pen name, George Sand. She was the one great love affair of his life. Their visit to Majorca, which has found a nesting place in literature in George Sand's *Un Hiver à Majorque*, was a rather dismal failure. The result was an illness, which his mistress nursed him through, and this began the continued ill health that lasted until his death. After Majorca came more composition and lessons in Paris, with summer visits to George Sand at her country home, and occasional trips to England. Then, in 1849, severe sickness and death.

All that was really important in Chopin's life happened within himself. No other great composer of the time is so utterly self-contained. Though he lived in an age of frenzied 'schools' and propaganda, he calmly worked as pleased him best, choosing what suited his personality and letting the rest go. His music is, perhaps, more consistently personal than that of any other composer of the century. It is remarkable, too, that the chief contemporary musical influences on his work came from second and third-rate men. He was intimate with Liszt, he was friendly with the Schumanns. But from them he borrowed next to nothing. Yet he worshipped Bach and Mozart. Nothing of the romantic Parisian frenzy of the thirties enters into his music; the only influence which the creed of the romanticists had upon him seems to have been the freeing of his mind from traditional obstacles, but it is doubtful whether his mind was not already quite free when he

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

reached Paris. All that he did was peculiarly his; his choice and rejection were accurate in the extreme.

In his piano playing he represented quite another school from that of Liszt. He was gentle where Liszt was frenzied; he was graceful where Liszt was pompous. Or, rather, his playing was of no school, but was simply his own. His imitators exaggerated his characteristics, carrying his *rubato* to a silly extreme. But no competent witness has testified that Chopin ever erred in taste. The criticism was constantly heard, during his lifetime, that he played too softly, that his tone was insufficient to fill a large hall. It was his style; he did not change because of his critics. He was not, perhaps, a virtuoso of the first rank, but all agree that the things which he did he did supremely well. The supreme grace of his compositions found its best exponent in him. Ornaments, such as the cadenzas of the favorite E flat Nocturne, he played with a liquid quality that no one could imitate. His *rubato* carried with it a magical sense of personal freedom, but was never too marked—was not a *rubato* at all, some say, since the left hand kept the rhythm quite even.

As a workman Chopin was conscientious in the extreme. He never allowed a work to go to the engraver until he had put the last possible touch of perfection to it. His posthumous compositions he desired never to have published. His judgment of them was correct; they are in almost every case inferior to the work which he gave to the public. Just where his individuality came from, no one can say; it seems to have been born in him. From Field * he borrowed the Nocturne form,

* John Field, b. Dublin, 1782; d. Moscow, 1837; pianist and composer; was a pupil of Clementi, whom he followed to Paris and later to St. Petersburg, where he became noted as a teacher. Afterwards he gave concerts successfully in London, as well as in Belgium, France, and Italy. His 20 'Nocturnes' for pianoforte are the basis of his fame. Being the first to use the name, he may be considered to have established the type. His other compositions include concertos, sonatas, etc., and some chamber music.

FELIX MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY

or rather name. From Hummel * and Cramer † he borrowed certain details of pianistic style. From the Italians he caught a certain luxurious grace that is not to be found in French or German music. But none of this explains the genius by which he turned his borrowings into great music.

Emotionally Chopin ranks perhaps as the greatest of composers. In subjective expression and the evocation of mood, apart from specific suggestion by words or 'program,' he is supreme. He is by no means merely the dreamy poet which we sometimes carelessly suppose. Nothing can surpass the force and vigor of his Polonaises, or the liveliness of his Mazurkas. In harmony his invention was as inexhaustible as in melody, and later music has borrowed many a progression from him. Indeed, in this respect he was one of the most original of composers. It has been said that in harmony there has been nothing new since Bach save only Chopin, Wagner, and Debussy. But, however radical his progressions may be, they are never awkward. They have that smoothness and that seeming inevitableness which the artist honors with the epithet, 'perfection.' Chopin's genius was wholly for the piano; in the little writing he did for orchestra or other instruments (mostly in connection with piano solo) there is nothing to indicate that music would have been the richer had he departed from his chosen field. In a succeeding chapter more will be said about his music. As to the man himself, it is all in his music. Any biographical detail which we can collect must pale before the Preludes, the Études, and the Polonaises.

* * * * *

An 'average music-lover,' about 1845, being questioned as to whom he thought the greatest living com-

* Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778-1837). See Vol. XI.

† Johann Baptist Cramer (1771-1858). See Vol. XI.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

poser, would almost undoubtedly have replied, 'Mendelssohn.' For Mendelssohn had just the combination of qualities which at the time could most charm people, giving them enough of the new to interest and enough of the old to avoid disconcerting shocks. Our average music-lover would have gone on to say that Mendelssohn had absorbed all that was good in romantic music—the freshness, the pictorial suggestiveness, the freedom from dry traditionalism—and had synthesized it with the power and clearness of the old forms. Mendelssohn was the one of the romantic composers who was instantly understood. His reputation has diminished steadily in the last half century. One does not say this vindictively, for his polished works are as delightful to-day as ever. But historically he cannot rank for a moment with such men as Liszt, Schumann, or Chopin. When we review the field we discover that he added no single new element to musical expression. His forms were the classical ones, only made flexible enough to hold their romantic content. His harmony, though fresh, was always strictly justified by classical tradition. His instrumentation, charming in the extreme, was only a restrained and tasteful use of resources already known and used. In a history of musical development Mendelssohn deserves no more than passing mention.

Of all the great musicians of history none ever received in his youth such a broad and sound academic education. In every way he was one of fortune's darlings. His life, like that of few other distinguished men of history (Macaulay alone comes readily to mind), was little short of ideal. He was born in 1809 in Hamburg, son of a rich Jewish banker. Early in his life the family formally embraced Christianity, which removed from the musician the disabilities he would otherwise have suffered in public life. His family life during his youthful years in Berlin was that

FELIX MENDELSSOHN-BARTHOLDY

which has always been traditionally Jewish—affectionate, simple, vigorous, and inspiring—and his education the best that money could secure. His father cultivated his talents with greatest care, but he was never allowed to become a spoiled child or to develop without continual kindly criticism. He became a pianist of almost the first rank, and was precocious in composition, steadily developing technical finish and individuality. At the age of 17, under the inspiration of the reading of Shakespeare with his sister Fanny, he wrote the 'Midsummer Night's Dream' overture, as finished and delightful a work as there is in all musical literature. At twenty he was given money to travel and look about the world for his future occupation. As a conductor (chiefly of his own works) and, to a lesser extent, as a pianist he steadily became more famous, until, in 1835, he was invited to become conductor of the concerts of the Gewandhaus Orchestra at Leipzig. In this position he rapidly became the most noted and perhaps the most immediately influential musician in Europe. From 1840 to 1843 he was connected with Berlin, where Frederick William IV had commissioned him to organize a musical academy, but in 1843 he did better by organizing the famous Conservatory at Leipzig, of which he was made director, with Schumann and Moscheles on the teaching staff. In 1847, after his tenth visit to England, he heard of the death of his beloved sister Fanny, and shortly afterward died. All Europe felt his death as a peculiarly personal loss.

What we feel in the man, beyond all else, is poise—one of the best of human qualities but not the most productive in art. He knew and loved the classical musicians—Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven—indeed, the 'resurrection' of Bach dates from his performance of the Matthew Passion in Berlin in 1828. He also felt, in

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

a delicate way, the romantic spirit of the age, and gave the most charming poetical pictures in his overtures. All that he did he did with a polish that recalls Mozart. His self-criticism was not profound, but was always balanced. In his personal character he seems almost disconcertingly perfect; we find ourselves wishing that he had committed a few real sins so as to become more human. His appreciation of other musicians was generous but limited; he never fully understood the value of Schumann, and his early meeting with Berlioz, though impeccably polite, was quite mystifying. His ability as an organizer and director was marked. His work in Leipzig made that city, next to Paris, the musical centre of Europe. Though his culture was broad he was scarcely affected by external literary or political currents, except to refine certain aspects of them for use in his music.

VIII

There were more reasons than the accidental conjunction of the Schumanns and Mendelssohn for the brilliant position of Leipzig in German musical life. For centuries the city had been, thanks to its university, one of the intellectual centres of Germany. Being also a mercantile centre, it became the logical location for numerous publishing firms. The prestige and high standard of the *Thomasschule*, of which Bach had for many years been 'Cantor,' had stimulated its musical life, and even when Mendelssohn arrived in 1835 the Gewandhaus Orchestra was one of the most excellent in Europe. The intellectual life of the city was of the sort that has done most honor to Germany—vigorous, scholarly, and critical, but self-supporting and self-contained. Around Mendelssohn and his influence there grew up the 'Leipzig school,' with Ferdinand

LEIPZIG AND ROBERT SCHUMANN

Hiller,* W. Sterndale Bennett,† Carl Reinecke,‡ and Niels W. Gade§ as its chief figures. Mendelssohn's emphasis on classicism and moderation was probably responsible for the tendency of this school to degenerate into academic dryness, but this was not present to dim its brilliancy during Mendelssohn's life.

In the 'Leipzig circle' Schumann was always something of an outsider. Though he was much more of Leipzig than Mendelssohn, he was too much of a revolutionary to be immediately influential. Nor did he have Mendelssohn's advantages in laying hold on the public. For the first twenty years of his life his connection with music was only that of the enthusiastic dilettante. Though his father, a bookseller of Zwickau in Saxony, favored the development of his musical gifts, his mother feared an artistic career and kept him headed toward the profession of lawyer until his inclinations became too strong. In the meantime he had graduated from the Gymnasium of Zwickau, where he was born in 1810, and entered the University of Leipzig as a student of law. His sensitiveness to all artistic influences in his youth was extremely marked, especially to the efflorescent poet and pseudo-philosopher, Jean Paul Richter (Jean Paul), on whom Schumann

* Born, Frankfort, 1811; died, Cologne, 1885; was a man of many parts, brilliant pianist and conductor, composer of fine sensibility and mastery of form, and a talented critic and author; cosmopolite and friend of many distinguished musicians, from Cherubini to Berlioz, and especially of Mendelssohn. He left operas, symphonies, oratorios, chamber music, etc., and theoretical works. His smaller works—piano pieces and songs—are still popular.

† Born, Sheffield, England, 1816; died, London, 1875. See Vol. XI.

‡ Born in Altona, near Hamburg, 1824; a highly educated musician, distinguished as pianist, conductor, composer, pedagogue, and critic. As conductor of the Gewandhaus Orchestra and as professor of piano and composition at the Leipzig Conservatory he exerted a long and powerful influence. As composer he followed the school of Mendelssohn and Schumann, was very prolific and distinguished by brilliant musicianship and ingenious if not highly original imagination. Besides operas, *singspiele* cantatas, symphonies, etc., he published excellent chamber music and many piano works.

§ See Vol. III, Chap. I.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

later based his literary style. In his youth he would organize amateur orchestras among his playfellows or entertain them with musical descriptions of their personalities on the piano. When, at about seventeen, he arrived in Leipzig to study in the University, he plunged into music, in particular studying the piano under Frederick Wieck, whose daughter, the brilliant pianist, Clara Wieck, later became his wife. An accident to his hand, due to over-zeal in practice, shattered his hopes of becoming a concert pianist, and he took to composition. He now devoted his efforts to repairing the gaps in his theoretical education, though not until a number of years later was he completely at home in the various styles of writing. His romantic courtship of Clara Wieck culminated, in 1840, in their marriage, against her father's wishes. Their life together was devoted and happy. The year of their marriage is that of Schumann's most fertile and creative work. His life from this time on was the strenuous one of composer and conductor, with not a few concert tours in which he conducted and his wife played his compositions. But more immediately fruitful was his literary work as editor of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, founded in 1834 to champion the romantic tendencies of the younger composers. Toward 1845 there were signs of a failing in physical and mental powers and at times an enforced cessation of activity. In 1853 he suffered extreme mental depression, and his mind virtually gave way. An attempted suicide in 1854 was followed by his confinement in a sanatorium, and his death followed in 1856.

Schumann is the most distinguished in the list of literary musicians. His early reactions to romantic tendencies in literature were intense, and when the time came for him to use his pen in defense of the music of the future he had an effective literary style at his command. It was the style of the time. Mere

LEIPZIG AND ROBERT SCHUMANN

academic or technical criticism he despised, not because he despised scholarship, but because he felt it had no place in written criticism. He set himself to interpret the spirit of music. True to romantic ideals, he was subjective before all. He sent his soul out on adventures among the masterpieces—or, rather, his souls; for he possessed several. One he called 'Florestan,' fiery, imaginative, buoyant; another was 'Eusebius,' dreamy and contemplative. It was these two names which chiefly appeared beneath his articles. Then there was a third, which he used seldom, 'Meister Raro,' cool judgment and impersonal reserve. He set himself to 'make war on the Philistines,' namely, all persons who were stodgy, academic, and dry. He had a fanciful society of crusaders among his friends which he dubbed the *Davidsbund*. With this equipment of buoyant fancy he was the best exemplar of the romantic idealism of his time and race.

The *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, organized in connection with enthusiastic friends, bravely battled for imagination and direct expression in music during the ten years of Schumann's immediate editorship and during his contributing editorship thereafter. Schumann's 'announcement' of Chopin in 1831, and of Brahms in 1853, have become famous. In most things his judgment was extraordinarily sound. Though he was frankly an apologist for one tendency, he appreciated many others, not excluding the reserved Mendelssohn, who was in many things his direct opposite. Sometimes, particularly in his prejudice against opera music, he disagreed with the tendencies of the time. After hearing 'Tannhäuser' in Dresden he could say nothing warmer than that on the whole he thought Wagner might some day be of importance to German opera. But, though Schumann was thus limited, he had the historical sense, and had scholarship behind his arti-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

cles, if not in them. During a several months' stay in Vienna he set himself to discovering forgotten manuscripts of Schubert, and the great C major symphony, first performed under Mendelssohn at the Gewandhaus concerts in 1839, owes its recovery to him.

Schumann worked generously in all forms except church music. At first he was chiefly a composer for the piano, and his genre pieces, 'pianistic' in a quite new way, opened the field for much subsequent music from other pens. In them his romantic fervor best shows itself. They are buoyantly pictorial and suggestive, though avoiding extremes, and they abound in literary mottoes. In 1840 begins his chief activity as a song composer, and here he takes a place second only to Schubert in loveliness and second to none in intimate subjective expression. Between 1841 and 1850 come four lovely symphonies, uneven in quality and without distinction in instrumentation, but glowing with vigorous life. In the last ten years of his life come the larger choral works, the 'Faust' scenes, several cantatas, the — and the opera 'Genoveva.' Throughout the latter part of his life are scattered the chamber works which are permanent additions to musical literature. These works, and their contributions to musical development, will be described in succeeding chapters.

* * * * *

These are the preëminent romantic composers. What they have in common is not so evident as seems at first glance. The very creed that binds them together makes them highly individual and dispartite. At bottom, the only possible specific definition of romantic music is a description of romantic music itself. 'Romantic' is at best a loose term; and it happens always to be a relative term.

But a brief formal statement of the old distinction

ROMANTICISM AND CLASSICISM

between 'romanticism' and 'classicism' may be helpful in following the description of romantic music in the following chapters. For the terms have taken on some sort of precise meaning in their course down the centuries. Perhaps the chief distinction lies in the æsthetic theory concerning limits. The Greek temple and the Gothic cathedral are the standard examples. The Greek loved to work intensively on a specific problem, within definite and known limits, controlling every detail with his intelligence and achieving the utmost perfection possible to careful workmanship. The Greek temple is small in size, can be taken in at a glance; every line is clear and definitely terminated; details are limited in number and each has its reason for existing; the work is a unit and each part is a part of an organic whole. The mediæval workman, on the other hand, was impressed by the richness of a world which he by no means understood; he loved to see all sorts of things in the heavens above and the earth beneath and to express them in his art. Ruskin makes himself the apologist for the Gothic cathedral when he says: 'Every beautiful detail added is so much richness gained for the whole.' The mediæval cathedral, then, is an amazing aggregation of rich detail. Unity is a minor matter. The cathedral is never to be taken in at a glance. Its lines drive upward and vanish into space; it is filled with dark corners and mysterious designs. It is an attempt to pierce beyond limits and achieve something more universal.

Here is the distinction, and it is more a matter of individual temperament than of historical action and reaction. The poise and control that come from working within pre-defined limits are the chief glory of the classical; the imagination and energy that come from trying to pass beyond limits are the chief charm of the romantic. Let us never expect to settle the controversy,

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

for both elements exist in all artists, even in Berlioz. But let us try to understand how the artist feels toward each of these inspirations, and to see what, in each age, is the specific impulse toward one or the other.

H. K. M.

CHAPTER VII

SONG LITERATURE OF THE ROMANTIC PERIOD

Lyric poetry and song—The song before Schubert—Franz Schubert; Carl Löwe—Robert Schumann; Robert Franz; Mendelssohn and Chopin; Franz Liszt as song writer.

SONG in the modern sense (the German word *Lied* expresses it) is peculiarly a phenomenon of the nineteenth century. In the preceding centuries it can hardly be said to have claimed the attention of composers. Vocal solos of many sorts there had, of course, been; but they were of one or another formal type and are sharply to be contrasted with the song of Schubert, Schumann, and Franz. If a prophet and theorist of the year 1800, foreknowing what was to be the spirit of the romantic age, had sketched out an ideal art form for the perfect expression of that spirit he would surely have hit upon the song. The fact that song was not composed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries proves how predominantly formal and how little expressive in purpose the music of that time was.

It is strange how little of the lyrical quality (in the poet's sense of the term) there was in the music of the eighteenth century. The lyric is that form of poetry which expresses individual emotion. It is thus sharply to be contrasted in spirit with all other forms—the epic, which tells a long and heroic story; the narrative, which tells a shorter and more special story; the dramatic, which pictures the characters as acting; the satiric, the didactic, and the other forms of more or less objective intent. No less is the lyric to be contrasted with the

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

other types in point of form. For, whereas the epic, the dramatic, and the rest can add detail upon detail at great length, and lives by its quantity of good things, the lyric stands or falls at the first blow. Either it transmits to the reader the emotion it seeks to express, or it does not, and if it does not then the longer it continues the greater bore it becomes. For all the forms of objective poetry can get their effect by reproducing objective details in abundance. But to transmit an emotion one must somehow get at the heart of it—by means of a suggestive word or phrase or of a picture that instantly evokes an emotional experience. The accuracy of the lyrical expression depends upon selecting just the right details and omitting all the rest. Thus the lyric must necessarily be short, while most of the other poetic forms can be indefinitely extended.

And, besides, an emotion usually lasts in its purity only for a moment. You divine it the instant it is with you, or you have lost it. It cannot be prolonged by conscious effort; it cannot be recalled by thinking about it. The expression of it will therefore last but for a moment. It must be caught on the wing. And the power so to catch an emotion is a very special power. Few poets have had it in the highest degree. Those who have had it, such as Burns, Goethe, or Heine, can, in a dozen lines or so, take their place beside the greatest poets of all time. The special beauty of 'My love is like a red, red rose' or '*Der du von dem Himmel bist*' or '*Du bist wie eine Blume*' is as far removed from that of the longer poem—say, 'Il Penseroso' or Swinburne's 'Hymn to Man'—as a tiny painting by Vermeer is from a canvas by Veronese. Emotional expression, of course, exists in many types of poetry, but it cannot be sustained and hence is only a sort of recurrent by-product. The lyric is distinguished by the fact that in it individual emotional expression is the single and unique aim.

LYRIC POETRY AND LYRIC SONG

This lyric spirit is obviously seldom to be found in the 'art' music of the eighteenth century. It is not too much to say that music in that age was regarded as dignified in proportion to its length. The clavichord pieces of Rameau or Couperin were hardly more than after-dinner amusements; and the fugues and preludes of Bach, for all the depth of the emotion in them and despite their flexible form, were primarily technical exercises. The best creative genius of the latter half of the century was expended upon the larger forms—the symphony, the oratorio, the opera, the mass.

All the qualities which are peculiar to the lyric in poetry we find in the song—the *Lied*—of the nineteenth century. A definition or description of the one could be applied almost verbatim to the other. The lyric song must be brief, emotional, direct. Like the lyric poem, it cannot waste a single measure; it must create its mood instantly. It is personal; it seeks not to picture the emotion in general, but the particular emotion experienced by a certain individual. It is unique; no two experiences are quite alike, and no two songs accurately expressive of individual experiences can be alike. It is sensuous; emotions are felt, not understood, and the song must set the hearer's soul in vibration. It is intimate; one does not tell one's personal emotions to a crowd, and the true song gives each hearer the sense that he is the sole confidant of the singer. Musical architecture, in the older sense, has very little to do with this problem. Individual expression goes its own way, and the music must accommodate itself to the form of the text. Abundance of riches is only in a limited way a virtue in a good song. The great virtue is to select just the right phrase to express the particular mood. Fine sensibilities are needed to appreciate a good song, for the song is a personal confession, and one can understand a friend's confession only if one has sensitive heart-strings.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

Thus the song was peculiarly fitted to express a large part of the spirit of the romantic period. This period, which appreciated the individual more than any other age since the time of Pericles (with the possible exception of the Italian Renaissance), which sought to make the form subsidiary to the sense, which sought to get at the inner reality of men's feelings, which longed for sensation and experience above all other things—this period expressed itself in a burst of spontaneous song as truly as the drama expressed Elizabethan England, or the opera expressed eighteenth century Italy.

I

Lyrical song begins with Schubert. Before him there was no standard of that form which he brought almost instantaneously to perfection. It is hard for us to realize how little respect the eighteenth century composer had for the short song. His attitude was not greatly unlike the attitude of modern poets toward the limerick. Gluck set his hand to a few indifferent tunes in the song-form, and Haydn and Mozart tossed off a handful, most of which are mediocre. These men simply did not consider the song worthy of the best efforts of a creative artist.

If we take a somewhat broader definition of the word song we find that it has been a part of music from the beginning. Folk-song, beginning in the prehistoric age of music, has kept pretty much to itself until recent times, and has had a development parallel with art music. From time to time it has served as a reservoir for this art music, opening its treasures richly when the conscious music makers had run dry. Thus it was in the time of the troubadours and trouvères (themselves only go-betweens) who took the songs of the people and gave them currency in fashionable secular

THE SONG BEFORE SCHUBERT

and church music. So it was again in the time of Luther, who used the familiar melodies of his time to build up his congregational chorales (a great part of the basis of German music from that day to this). So it was again in the time of Schubert, who enjoyed nothing better than walking to country merry-makings to hear the country people sing their songs of a holiday. And so it has been again in our own day, when national schools—Russian, Spanish, Scandinavian and the rest—are flourishing on the treasures of their folk-songs. And when we say that song began with Schubert we must not forget that long before him, though almost unrecognized, there existed songs among the people as perfect and as expressive as any that composers have ever been able to invent. But these songs are constructed in the traditional verse-form and are, therefore, very different from most of the art songs of the nineteenth century, which are detailed and highly flexible.

Of the songs composed before the time of Schubert, mostly by otherwise undistinguished men, the greater part were in the simple form and style of the folk-song. A second element in pre-Schubertian song was the chorale. The *Geistliche Lieder* (Spiritual Songs) of J. S. Bach were nothing but chorales for solo voice. And the spirit and harmonic character of the chorale, little cultivated in romantic song, are to be found in a good part of the song literature of the eighteenth century. A third element in eighteenth century song was the *da capo* aria of the opera or oratorio. Many detached lyrics were written in this form, or even to resemble the more highly developed sonata form—as, for instance, Haydn's charming 'My Mother Bids Me Bind My Hair,' which is otherwise as expressive and appropriate a lyric as one could ask for. The effect of such an artificial structure on the most intimate and delicate of art forms was in most cases deadly, and songs

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

of this type were little more than oratorio arias out of place.

It will be seen that each of these sorts of song has some structural form to distinguish it. The folk-song, which must be easy for untechnical persons to memorize, naturally is cast in the 'strophic' form—that is, one in which the melody is a group of balanced phrases (generally four, eight, or sixteen), used without change for all the stanzas of the song. The chorale or hymn tune is much the same, being derived from the folk-song and differing chiefly in its more solid harmonic accompaniment. And the *da capo* aria is distinguished and defined by its formal peculiarity.

Now it is evident that for free and detailed musical expression the melody must be allowed to take its form from the words and that none of these three traditional forms can be allowed to control the musical structure. And the *Lied* of the nineteenth century is chiefly distinguished, at least as regards externals, by this freedom of form. Such a song, following no traditional structure, but answering to the peculiarities of the text throughout, is the *durchkomponiertes Lied*, or song that is 'composed all the way through,' which Schubert established once and for all as an art-type.

But in its heart of hearts the 'art' song at its best remains an own cousin to the folk-song. This art, the mother of art and the fountain of youth to all arts that are senescent, takes what is typical, what is common to all men, casts it into a form which is intelligible to all men, and passes through a thousand pairs of lips and a thousand improvements until it is past the power of men further to perfect it. Its range of subject is as wide as life itself, only it chooses not what is individual and peculiar, but what is universal and typical. It has a matchless power for choosing the expressive detail and the dramatic moment. An emotion which shakes nations it can concentrate into a few burning lines.

THE SONG BEFORE SCHUBERT

It is never conscious that it is great art; it takes no thought for the means; it is only interested in expressing its message as powerfully and as simply as possible. In doing this it hits upon the phrases that are at the foundation of our musical system, at the cadences which block in musical architecture upon the structure from which all conscious forms are derived.

This popular art, as we have said, has revived music again and again. It was the soul of the Lutheran chorale, which, the Papists sneeringly said, was the chief asset of the Reformation, since it furnished the sensuous form under which religion took its place in the hearts of the people. It is the foundation of Johann Sebastian Bach's music from beginning to end. And it is therefore the foundation of the work of Bach's most famous son, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, from whom the 'art song' takes its rise. In the fifties he published the several editions of his 'Melodies' to the spiritual songs of Christian Fürchtegott Gellert; these may be taken as the beginning of modern song. In his preface Bach shows the keenness of his understanding, stating in theory the problem which Schubert solved in practice. He says that he has endeavored to invent, in each case, the melody which will express the spirit of the whole poem, and not, as had been the custom, merely that which accords with the first stanza. In other words, he recognizes the incongruity of expecting one tune to express the varying moods of several dissimilar stanzas. His solution was to strike a general average among the stanzas and suit his tune to it. Schubert solved the problem by composing his music continuously to suit each stanza, line, and phrase—in other words, by establishing the *durchkomponiertes Lied*, the modern art song.

Philipp Emanuel Bach thus saw that the *Lied* should do what the folk-song and the formal aria could not do. It is a nice question, whether the conscious *durch-*

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

komponiertes Lied is more truly expressive than the strophic folk-song. Mr. Henderson, in his book 'Songs and Song Writers' * illustrates the problem by comparing Silcher's well-known version of Heine's *Die Lorelei* with Liszt's. Silcher's eight-line tune has become a true folk-song. It keeps an unvarying form and tune through three double stanzas, using, to express the lively action of the end, the same music that expresses the natural beauty of the beginning. Liszt, on the other hand, with masterful imaginative precision, follows each detail of the picture and action in his music. Mr. Henderson concludes that he would not give Liszt's setting for a dozen of Silcher's. Some of us, however, would willingly give the whole body of Liszt's music for a dozen folk tunes like Silcher's. It is, of course, a matter of individual preference. But we should give an understanding heart to the method of the folk-song, which offers to the poem a formal frame of great beauty, binding the whole together in one mood, while it allows the subsidiary details to play freely, and perhaps the more effectually, by contrast with the dominant tone. Whatever may be one's final decision in the matter, a study and comparison of the two settings will make evident the typical qualities of the folk-song and 'art' song as nothing else could.

Emanuel Bach also showed his feeling for the lyrical quality of the *Lied* by apologizing, between the lines, for his poems, saying that, although the didactic is not the sort of poetry best suited to musical treatment, Gellert's fine verses justified the procedure in his case. There is in the melodies, as we have said, something of the feeling of the folk-song and of the Lutheran chorale. And there is also in them an indefinable quality which in a curious way looks forward to the free melodic expression of Schubert.

Throughout the eighteenth century the chief repre-

* W. J. Henderson: 'Songs and Song Writers,' pp. 182 ff.

THE SONG BEFORE SCHUBERT

sentative of pure German song was the singspiel, or light and imaginative dramatic entertainment with songs and choruses interspersed with spoken dialogue. The singspiel was not a highly honored form of art; it held a place somewhat analogous to the vaudeville among us—that is, loved by the people, but regarded as below the dignity of a first-class musician (Italian opera being *à la mode*). Nevertheless, we find some excellent light music among these singspiele. Reichardt's *Erwin und Elmira*, to Goethe's text, contains numbers which in simple charm and finish of workmanship do not fall far below Mozart. These singspiele maintained the German spirit in song in the face of the Italian tradition until Weber came and made the tinder blaze in the face of all Europe. Reichardt felt the spirit of the time. He was one of those valuable men who make things move while they are living and are forgotten after they are dead. As kapellmeister under Frederick the Great he introduced reforms which made him unpopular among the conservative spirits. His open sympathy with the principles of the French revolution led to his dismissal from his official post. From such a man we should expect exactly what we find—an admiration for folk-songs and an insistence that art songs should be founded on them. He was widely popular and had a considerable influence on his time. He was thus a power in keeping German song true to the best German traditions until the time when Schubert raised it to the first rank. Reichardt was also the first to make a specialty of Goethe's songs, having set some hundred and twenty-five of them.

Zelter,* likewise, was best known in his time for his settings of Goethe's lyrics, and the poet preferred them to those of Schubert. This fact need not excite such indignation as is sometimes raised in reference to it,

* Carl Friedrich Zelter, b. Petzow-Werder on the Havel, 1758; d. Berlin, 1832.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

for Goethe was little of a musician. Zelter kept true to the popular tradition and some of his songs are still sung by the German students. Zumsteeg* was another important composer of the time, the first important composer of ballads, and a favorite with Schubert, who based his early style on him.

Historically the songs of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven are of less importance than those of the composers just named. Haydn's are predominantly instrumental in character. Mozart was much more of a poet for the voice, and has to his credit at least one song, 'The Violet,' a true *durchkomponiertes Lied*, which can take its place beside the best in German song literature. Beethoven's songs are often no more than musical routine. His early 'Adelaide,' a sentimental scena in the Italian style, is his best known, but his setting to Gellert's 'The Heavens Declare the Glory of the Eternal' is by far the finest. Except that it is a little stiff in its grandeur it would be one of the noblest of German songs. Yet Beethoven's place in the history of song rests chiefly upon the fact that he was one of the first to compose a true song cycle having poetical and musical unity. In some ways he anticipated Schumann's practises.

II

With Schubert the *Lied* appears, so to speak, ready made. After his early years there is no more development toward the *Lied*; there is only development of the *Lied*. In his eighteenth year Schubert composed a song which is practically flawless ('The Erlking') and continued thereafter producing at a mighty pace, sometimes nodding, like Homer, and ever and again dashing off something which is matchless. In all he com-

* Johann Rudolph Zumsteeg, b. Sachsenflur (Odenwald), 1760; d. Stuttgart, 1802.

SCHUBERT'S SONGS

posed some six hundred and fifty songs. Many of them are mediocre, as is inevitable with one who composes in such great quantity. Many others, like the beautiful *Todesmusik*, are uneven, passages of highest beauty alternating with vapid stretches such as any singing teacher might have composed. He wrote as many as six or seven songs between breakfast and dinner, beginning the new one the instant he had finished the old. He sometimes sold them at twenty cents apiece (when he could sell them at all). It is easy to say that he should have composed less and revised more, but it does not appear that it cost him any more labor to compose a great song than a mediocre one. On the whole, it seems that Schubert measured his powers justly in depending on the first inspiration. At the same time, it has been established that he was not willfully careless with his songs—not, at any rate, with the ones he believed in. A number were revised and copied three and four times. But generally his first inspiration, whether it was good or bad, was allowed to stand.

Now this facility is not to be confounded with superficiality. Schubert, taking an inspiration from the poems he read, went straight for the heart of the emotion. No amount of painstaking could have made *Am Meer* more profound in sentiment. His course was simply that of Nature, producing in great quantity in the expectation that the inferior will die off and the best will perpetuate themselves. The range of his emotional expression is very great. It is safe to say that there is no type of sentiment or mood in any song of the last hundred years which cannot find its prototype in Schubert. His songs include ballads with a touch of the archaic, like 'The Erlking'; lyrics with the most delicate wisp of symbolism, like *Das Heidenröslein* ('Heather Rose'); with the purest lyricism, like the famous 'Serenade' or the 'Praise of Tears'; lyrics of

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

the deepest tragedy, like 'The Inn,' or pathos, like 'Death and the Maiden'; of the most intense emotional energy, like *Aufenthalt*; of the merriest light-heartedness, like 'Hark, Hark, the Lark' or the *Wanderlied*; and of the most exalted grandeur, like *Die Allmacht*.

It would be out of place here to estimate these songs in any detail. For they have a personal quality which makes the estimating of them for another person a ridiculous thing. Like all truly personal things, they have, to the individual who values them, a value quite incommensurable. Each of the best songs is unique, and is not to be compared with any other. They are irreplaceable and their value seems infinite. Hence the praise of one who loves these songs would sound foolishly extravagant to another. We can here only review and point out the general qualities and characteristics of Schubert's output.

With one of his earliest songs—'Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel'—composed when he was seventeen, Schubert establishes the principle of detailed delineation in the accompaniment, developed so richly in the succeeding decades. The whole of the melody is bound together by the whirring of the wheel in the accompaniment. But when Gretchen comes to her exclamation, 'And ah, his kiss!' she stops spinning for a moment and the harmonies in the piano become intense and colorful. This principle of delineative detail, even more than the *durchkomponierte* form, constitutes the difference between the 'art' song and its prototype, the folk-song. The details become more and more frequent in Schubert's songs as his artistic development continues. They are rarely realistic, as in Liszt, but they always catch the mood or the emotional nuance with eloquent suggestiveness. A free song, like *Die Allmacht*, follows the varying moods of the text line for line. But Schubert did not follow his text word for word as later

SCHUBERT'S SONGS

song-writers did. He felt what the folk-singer feels, the formal musical unity of his song as apart from the unity in the meaning of the words. He was never willing to admit a delineative detail that involved a harsh break in the flow of beautiful melody. It was his choice of melody, much more than his choice of delineative detail, that gave eloquence to his songs.

This melody is of great beauty and fluency from the beginning. The lovely songs of the spectral tempter in 'The Erlking' could not be more beautiful. Yet this gift of lovely melody becomes richer, deeper, and even more spontaneous as Schubert grew older—richer and more spontaneous than has been known in any other composer before or since. It is nearly always based on the regular and measured melody of folk-song, and rarely becomes anything approaching the free 'endless melody' of Wagner. But beyond such a generalization as this it can scarcely be covered with a single descriptive phrase. It was adequate to every sort of emotional expression, and was so gently flexible in form that it could fit any sort of poem without losing its graceful contour.

'The Erlking,' perhaps Schubert's best known song (it is certainly one of his greatest), is a perfect example of the ballad, or condensed dramatic-narrative poem, a type which had been cultivated by Zumsteeg, but had never reached real artistic standing. It demands sharp characterization of the speaking characters, and especially some means of setting the mood of the poem as a whole, in order to keep the story within its frame and give it its artistic unity. The former Schubert supplies with his melodies; the latter with the accompaniment of triplets, with the recurring figure representing the galloping of the horse. Without interrupting the musical flow of his song he introduces the delineative detail where it is needed, as in the double dissonance at the repeated shriek of the child—a musical proce-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

ture that was revolutionary at the time it was written. And, if there were nothing else in the song to prove genius, it would be proved by the last line in which, for the first time, the triplets cease and the announcement that the child was dead is made in an abrupt recitative, carrying us back to a realization of the true nature of the ballad as a tale that is told, a legend from the olden times. It must always be a pity that Schubert did not write more ballads. He is commonly known as a lyric genius, but he could be equally a descriptive genius. Yet only 'The Young Nun,' among the better known of his songs, is at all narrative in quality.

Schubert's form, as we have said, ranges all the way from the simple strophe, or verse form, up to the verge of the declamatory. He was extremely fond of the strophe, and usually used it with perfect justice, as in the famous 'Who is Sylvia,' 'Hark, Hark, the Lark,' and 'Ave Maria.' Very often he uses the strophe form modified and developed for the last stanza, as in *Du bist die Ruh*, or the 'Serenade.' Again, as in *Die Allmacht* and *Aufenthalt*, the melody, while being perfectly measured and regular, follows the text with utmost freedom. And, finally, there is *Der Doppelgänger*, which is scarcely more than expressive declamation over a declinative accompaniment. 'The music of the future!' exclaims Mr. Henderson. 'Wagner's theories a quarter of a century before he evolved them.'

A number of Schubert's are grouped together in 'cycles,' a procedure practised by Beethoven in his *An die Ferne Geliebte*, and brought to perfection by Schumann. Schubert's twenty-four songs, 'The Fair Maid of the Mill,' to words by Müller, tell the story of a love affair and its consequent tragedy, enacted near the mill, by the side of the brook, which ripples all through the series. The songs tell a consecutive story somewhat in the fashion of Tennyson's 'Maud,' but the group has

SCHUBERT'S CONTEMPORARIES

little of the inner unity of Schumann's cycles. The 'Winter Journey' series, also to Müller's text, is more closely bound together by its mood of old-aged despair. The last fourteen songs which the composer wrote were published after his death as 'Swan Songs,' and the name has justly remained, for they seem one and all to be written under the oppressive fear of death. They include the six songs composed to the words of Heine, whose early book of poems the composer had just picked up. What a pity, if Schubert could not have lived longer, that Heine did not live earlier! Each of these Heine songs is a masterpiece.

Schubert's literary sense may not have been highly critical, but it managed to include the greatest poets and the best poems that were to be had. His settings include seventy-two to words by Goethe, fifty-four of Schiller, forty-four of Müller, forty-eight of his friend Mayrhofer, nineteen of Schlegel, nineteen of Klopstock, nineteen of Körner, ten of Walter Scott, seven of Ossian, three of Shakespeare, and the immortal six of Heine. And, though he was not inspired in any very direct proportion to the literary worth of his poems, he responded truly to the lyrical element wherever he found it.

Writing at about the same time with Schubert were the opera composers Ludwig Spohr, Heinrich Marschner, and Weber. The song output of these men has not proved historically important, but they have to their credit the fact that they were true to the German faith. Marschner's songs are not altogether dead to-day, and Weber's are in a few instances excellent. They come nearer than those of any other composer to the true style and spirit of the folk-song, and reveal from another angle the presiding genius of Weber's operas.

The place for the ballad which Schubert left almost vacant in his work was filled by Johann Carl Gottfried

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

(Carl) Löwe, born only a few months before him.* The numerous compositions of his long life have been forgotten, except for his ballads. And these have lived, in spite of their feeble melodic invention, by their sheer dramatic energy. Löwe's ballads depend wholly on their words—that is their virtue; as music apart they have scarcely any existence. But Löwe's dramatic sense was abundant and vigorous. A study of his setting of 'The Erlking' as compared with that of Schubert will instantly make evident the differences between the two men. The motif of the storm is more complex and wild; the speeches of the Erlking are strange and mystical, as far as possible removed from the suave melody of Schubert. The voice part is at every turn made impressive rather than beautiful. Superficially Schubert's method looks the more superficial and in-artistic, but it conquers by the matchless expressive power of its melody. Löwe's ballads compel our respect, in spite of their lack of melodic invention. They are carefully selected and include some of the best poetry of the time. They are worked out with great care, and are conscientiously true to the meaning of the words as songs rarely were in his day. They are designed to make an impressive effect in a large concert hall. They have a considerable range, from the mock-primitive heroics of Ossian to the boisterous humor of Goethe's 'Sorcerer's Apprentice.' And in their cultivation of the declamatory style and of the delineative accompaniment they were important in the musical development of the age.

III

Schumann was not, like Schubert, a singer from his earliest years. He was at first a dilettante of the piano,

* In 1796 at Löbejün, near Köthen. He was educated in Halle, patronized by King Jerome of Westphalia, Napoleon's brother, and later became municipal musical director at Stettin. He died in Kiel, 1869.

ROBERT SCHUMANN'S SONGS

and as he grew up dreamed of becoming a virtuoso. He was enchanted by the piano, told it his thoughts, and was fascinated by its undiscovered possibilities. His genius came to its first maturity in his piano works, and all his thoughts were at first for this instrument.

He did not write his first song until 1840; that is, until almost the end of his thirtieth year. When he did take to song-writing he wrote furiously. There was a reason for it. For after several years of passionate love-making to his Clara, and of almost more passionate stubbornness on the part of her father, the young people took the law into their own hands (quite literally, since they had to invoke the courts) and were married in 1840. The first happiness of married life and the anticipations leading up to it seem to have generated in Schumann that demand for a more personal and intimate expression than his beloved piano could offer. Though he had never been a rapid writer he now wrote many songs at a stretch, as many as three or four in a day. He seemed unable to exhaust what he had to say. By the time the year was over he had composed more than a hundred songs. He declared himself satisfied with what he had done. He might come back to song-writing, he said; but he wasn't sure.

He did come back to it, but not until his creative powers were on the wane. In the last six or seven years of his life he wrote more than a hundred new songs, but hardly one of them rises above mediocrity. All the songs that have made him famous, and all that are worthy of his genius, date from the year of his marriage.

Just what, in a technical way, Schumann was trying to do in his first songs we do not know. It is probable that the ammunition for his unusual harmonic progressions and his freer declamatory style came from his own piano pieces. Fundamentally we know he admired Schubert almost without reserve,

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

having already spent the best part of a year in Vienna, unearthed a number of Schubert scores, and spread Schubert's reputation to the best of his ability. Yet there is hardly one of Schumann's songs that could for a moment be mistaken for Schubert's, so different was the musical genesis of the two composers in their song-writing. Schumann is a part of the Schubert tradition; but he is just so much further developed (whether for the better or for the worse may be left to the theorists).

With Schumann the tendency of detailed musical description is carried into a greater number of songs and into a greater variety of details. The declamatory element increases, both in the number of songs which it dominates and in the extent to which it influences the more melodic songs. The part of the piano is tremendously increased, so much so that the *Waldeggespräch* has been called a symphonic poem with recitative accompaniment by the voice. The harmony, while lacking in Schubert's entrancingly simple enharmonic changes, is more unusual, showing in particular a tendency to avoid the perfect cadence, which would have hurt Franz Schubert's ear for a time. Schumann's songs are commonly called 'psychological,' and this much-abused word may be allowed to stand in the sense that Schumann offered a separate statement of the separate strands of an emotional state, while Schubert more usually expressed the emotional state pure and simple. No songs could be more subjective than some of Schubert's later ones, but many, including Schumann's, have been more complex in emotional content. But perhaps the first thing one feels on approaching the Schumann songs is that they are consciously wrought, that they are the work of a thinker. This is no doubt partly because Schumann, with all his gifts, did not have at his disposal Schubert's wonderfully rich melody and was obliged to weigh and consider.

SCHUMANN'S SONGS

But it is also quite to be expected from the nature of the man. While Schumann's songs are by no means so rich as Schubert's in point of melody, there are a few of his tunes, especially the famous *Widmung*, which can stand beside any in point of pure musical beauty. Still, it must be admitted that Schumann's truly great songs, even from the output of 1840, are decidedly limited in number.

To understand better what is meant by the word 'psychological' in connection with Schumann's songs, let us turn to his most famous group, the 'Woman's Life and Love.' The first of the group, 'Since My Eyes Beheld Him,' tells of the young girl who has awakened to her first half-consciousness of love. It is hero worship, but it is disconcerting, making her strangely conscious of herself, anxious to be alone and dream, surrounded by a half sensuous, half sentimental mist. The music is hesitating and broken, with many chromatic progressions and suspensions in the piano part which rob it of any firm harmonic outline. In the whole of the voice part there is not a single perfect cadence. The melody is utterly lovely, but it sounds indefinite, as though it were always just beginning; only here and there it rises into a definite phrase of moody longing. In the second song, the famous *Er, der Herrlichste von Allen* the girl has come to full consciousness of her emotion. Her loved one is simply her hero, the noblest of men. The music is straightforward and decisive; the main theme begins with the notes of the tonic chord (the 'bugle notes'). There is no lack of full cadence and pure half cadences. In the third song the girl has received the man's avowal of love, and is overcome with amazement, almost terror, that her hero should look with favor upon *her*. The voice part is scarcely more than a broken recitative, and the accompaniment is largely of short sharp chords. Only for one ecstatic instant the melody becomes lyrically lovely,

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

in the richest German strain: it is on the words 'I am forever thine.' In the sixth song the mother is gazing at her newborn baby and weeping. The voice part is free declamation, with a few rich chords in the accompaniment to mark the underlying depth of emotion. In the eighth and last song the husband has died. The form of the song is much the same as that of the sixth, only the chords are now heavy and tragic. As the lamenting voice dies away the piano part glides into the opening song, played softly; the wife dreams of the first awakening of her love. The effect is to cast the eight songs into a long backward vista, magically making us feel that we have lived through the years of the woman's life and love.

This, easily the most famous of song cycles, is the type of all of them. Beethoven wrote a true cycle, but his songs are by no means equal to Schumann's. Schubert wrote cycles, but none with the close bond and inner unity of this one. Nor are Schumann's other cycles—'Myrtles,' the *Liederkreis*, song series from Eichendorff and another under the same name from other poets, the 'Poet's Love' from Heine, the Kerner cycle, and the 'Springtime of Love' cycle—so closely bound as this. The song cycle, on this plane, is a triumph of the accurate delineative power of music.

Almost as much as of this type of 'psychology' Schumann is master of the delicate picture of mood, as in *Die Lotosblume*, *Der Nussbaum*, and the thrice lovely *Mondnacht*. His musical high spirits often serve him in good stead, as in Kerner's 'Wanderer's Song.' In 'To the Sunshine' he imitates the folk-song style with remarkable success. In the short ballad he has at least two works of supreme beauty, the *Waldeggespräch*, already referred to, and the well known 'Two Grenadiers.' There is a certain grim humor (one of the few lyrical qualities which Schubert never successfully attempted) in his setting of Heine's masterly 'The Old

and Bitter Songs.' And, finally, one song that stands by itself in song literature—the famous *Ich grolle nicht*, admired everywhere, yet not beyond its deserts. Here is tragedy deep and exalted as in a Greek drama—though it is disconcerting to note how much more seriously Schumann took the subject than did his poet, Heine.

IV

In 1843, when Schumann had made his first success as a song writer, he received from an unknown young man a batch of songs in manuscript. With his customary promptitude and sureness, he announced the young man in his journal, the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. This man was Robert Franz, who, many insist, is the greatest song writer in the world, barring only Schubert.* Franz, it seems, had had an unhappy love affair, and had taken to song-writing to ease his feelings, having burned up all his previous compositions as worthless. Schumann did for Franz what he did for Brahms and to some extent for Chopin—put him on the musical map—and that on the strength of an examination of only a few early compositions. Through his influence Franz's Opus 1 was published, and thereafter, steadily for many years, came songs from Franz's pen. He wrote little other original music, save a few pieces for church use. His reputation refused to grow rapidly, for there was little in his work or personality on which to build *réclame*, but it has grown steadily. The student of his songs will discover a high propor-

* Originally his name was Knauth, but his father changed it by royal consent to Franz. He was born in Halle in 1815 and died there in 1892. He became organist, choral conductor, and university musical director in his native city. An assiduous student of Bach and of Handel, his townsman, he combined a contrapuntal style with Schumannesque sentiment in his songs, of which there appeared 350, besides some choral works. His critical editions of Bach and Handel works are of great value. Almost total deafness cut short Franz's professional activity.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

tion of first-rate songs among them—higher, probably, than in any other song composer.

Franz is one of those composers of whose work little can be told in print. It is all in the music. Unlike Schubert and Schumann, he limited himself in his choice of subjects, taking mostly poems of delicate sentiments, and avoiding all that was realistic. Unlike Schubert, he worked over his songs with greatest care, sometimes keeping them for years before he had fashioned them to perfection. His voice parts are, on the whole, more independent than Schumann's. They combine perfect declamatory freedom and accurate observance of the text with a delicate finish of melodic grace. The accompaniments are in many styles. Broken chords he uses with distinction, so that the individual notes seem not only harmonic but melodic in their function. In him, more than in previous song writers, polyphony (deriving from his familiarity with Bach) plays a prominent part. He is a master in the use of delicate dissonance, and in some ways the poetry of his accompaniments looks forward to the 'atmospheric' effects of what we loosely term the 'impressionistic school.' He does not strike the heights or depths of emotion, but his music at times is as moving as any in song literature. Above all, he stands for the perfect and intimate union of text and music, in a more subtle way than was accomplished either by Schubert or Schumann.

Mendelssohn wrote many songs during his days of fame, which had a popularity far outshining that of the songs we have been speaking of. They sold in great abundance, especially in England, and fetched extraordinary prices from publishers. But by this time they have sunk pretty nearly into oblivion. They are polished, as all his work is, and have the quality of instantly pleasing a hearer who doesn't care to listen too hard. Needless to say, their musicianship is above re-

MENDELSSOHN, CHOPIN, AND LISZT

proach. But their melody, while graceful, is undistinguished, and their emotional message is superficial.

Chopin, however, composed a little book of Polish songs which deserves to be immortal. They purported to be arrangements of Polish melodies together with original songs in the same spirit. As a matter of fact, they are probably almost altogether Chopin's work. In them we find the highest refinement of melodic contour, and an exotic poetry in the accompaniments such as none but Chopin, at the time, could write. 'The Maiden's Wish' is perhaps the only one familiar to the general public, and that chiefly through Liszt's piano arrangement of it. But among the others there are some of the first rank, particularly the 'Baccanale,' 'My Delights,' and 'Poland's Dirge.'

In the intervals of his busy life Liszt managed to pen some sixty or more *Lieder*, of which a large proportion are of high quality. They suffer less than the other classes of his compositions from the intrusion of banality and gallery play. In them Liszt is never the poet of delicate emotion, but certain things he did better than either Schubert or Schumann. The high heroism, often mock, which we feel in his orchestral writing is here, too. He had command of large design; he could paint the splendid emotion. His ballads are, on the whole, among the best we have. In his setting of Uhland's 'The Ancestral Tomb,' he caught the mysterious aura of ancient balladry as few others have. When there is a picture to be described Liszt always has a musical phrase that suits the image. And in a few instances, as in his settings of *Der du von dem Himmel bist* and *Du bist wie eine Blume*, he achieved the lyric at its least common denominator—the utmost simplicity of sentiment expressed by the utmost simplicity of musical phrase. It was a feat he rarely repeated. For in these songs he painted not only the picture, but also the emotion. In Mignon's song, 'Know'st thou the

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

Land?' he has put into a single phrase the very breath of homesickness. His setting of 'The Loreley' has already been mentioned. It could hardly be finer in its style. The preliminary musing of the poet, the quivering of a dimly remembered song, the flow of the Rhine, the song of the Loreley, the sinking of the ship, are all described. Still finer is 'The King of Thule,' which, with all its elaboration of detail, keeps to the sense of archaic simplicity that is in Goethe's poem. In his settings of Victor Hugo, Liszt was as appropriate as with Goethe, and we find in them all the transparency of technique and the delicacy of sentiment that distinguishes French verse. In all these songs Liszt uses the utmost freedom of declamation in the voice part, with fine regard for the integrity of the text.

H. K. M.

CHAPTER VIII

PIANOFORTE AND CHAMBER MUSIC OF THE ROMANTIC PERIOD

Development of the modern pianoforte—The pioneers: Schubert and Weber—Schumann and Mendelssohn—Chopin and others—Franz Liszt, virtuoso and poet—Chamber music of the romantic period; Ludwig Spohr and others.

I

THE striking difference between the pianoforte music of the nineteenth century and that of the eighteenth is, of course, not an accident. That of the eighteenth is in most cases not properly piano music at all, since it was composed specifically for the clavichord or harpsichord, which have little beyond the familiar keyboard in common with the modern pianoforte. Both classes of instruments were known and in use throughout the greater part of the eighteenth century, and the date 1800 may be taken as that at which the pianoforte displaced its rivals. Much of the old harpsichord music is played to-day on the piano (as, for instance, Bach's preludes and fugues), but the structure of the music is very different, and the effect on the piano gives no idea of the effect as originally intended.

The most superficial glance shows eloquently the difference between the two sorts of keyboard music. That of the nineteenth century differs from its predecessor in its emphasis on long sustained 'singing' melody, in its greater range, in its reliance on special tone qualities, in being (to a great extent) melodic instead of polyphonic, in wide skips and separation of notes, and,

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

above all, in its use of sustained chords. Leaving aside the specific tendencies of the romantic period, all these differences can be explained by the difference in the instruments for which the two sorts of music were written.

The clavichord was a very simple instrument of keys and strings. The length of the vibrating string (which determines its pitch) was set, at the stroke which set it in vibration, by a metal 'tangent' on the end of the key lever, being at once the hammer and the fret of the string. The stroke was slight, the tone was extremely soft. The vibration continued only a few seconds and was so slight that anything like the 'singing tone' of the pianoforte was impossible. But within the duration of a single note the player, by a rapid upward and downward movement of the wrist which varied the pressure on the key, could produce a wavering tone similar to the vibrato of the human voice and the violin, which gave a faint but live warmth to the tone, unhappily wholly lacking in the tone of the pianoforte. It was doubtless this peculiar 'live' expressiveness which made the instrument a favorite of the great Bach, and which, moreover, justifies the player in making the utmost possible variety of tone in playing Bach's clavier works on the modern instrument. The sound of the instrument was something like that of an æolian harp, and was therefore quite unsuited to the concert hall. But it was of a sympathetic quality that made it a favorite for small rooms, and much loved by composers for their private musings.

The harpsichord was the concert piano, so to speak, of the time. Its strings were plucked by means of a short quill, and a damper automatically deadened the tone an instant afterwards. The instrument was therefore quite incapable of sustained melody, or of gradations of volume, except with the use of stops, which on the best instruments could bring new sets of strings into

DEVELOPMENT OF THE MODERN PIANOFORTE

play. Its tone was sharp and mechanical, not very unlike that of a mandolin.

Now what the modern pianoforte possesses (apart from its greater range and resonance) is chiefly ability to control the power of the tone by force or lightness of touch, and to sustain individual notes, by means of holding down the key, or all of them together through the use of the sustaining pedal. Theoretically, the clavichord could both control power and sustain notes, but the tone was so slight that these virtues were of little practical use. The ground principle of the pianoforte is its rebounding hammer, which strikes the string with any desired power and immediately rebounds so as to permit it to continue vibrating. Each string is provided with its damper, which is held away from it as long as the key is pressed down. The sustaining or damper pedal removes all the dampers from the strings, so that any notes which are struck will continue vibrating. The one thing which the piano cannot do is to control the tone after it is struck. By great care in the use of materials piano makers have been able to produce a tone which continues vibrating with great purity and persistence, but this inevitably dies out as the vibrations become diminished in amplitude. The 'legato' of the pianoforte is only a second best, and is rather an aural illusion than a fact. Any increasing of the tone, as with the violin, is quite impossible. Any true sustaining of the tone is equally impossible, but, by skillful writing and playing, the illusion of a legato tone can be well maintained and a far greater beauty and variety of effect can be reached than one might think possible from a mechanical examination of the instrument.

Before 1770 (the date of Beethoven's birth) clavier music existed only for the clavichord and the harpsichord, though it could also be played on the pianoforte. Beethoven grew up with the maturing piano-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

forte. By the time he had reached his artistic maturity (in 1800) it had driven its rivals from the field. Up to 1792 all Beethoven's compositions were equally adapted to the piano and the harpsichord. Up to 1803 they were published for pianoforte or harpsichord, though it is probable that in the preceding decade he had written most of his clavier music with the pianoforte in mind.

The earliest pianoforte (made in the first two decades of the eighteenth century) had a compass of four and a half octaves, a little more than that of the ordinary clavichord. The pianoforte of Mozart's time had five octaves, and Clementi added half an octave in 1793. By 1811 six and a half octaves had been reached, and in 1836 (about the time of the publication of Liszt's first compositions, barring the youthful *Études*) there were seven, or seven and one-third, which have remained the standard ever since. During all this time piano makers had been endeavoring to increase the rigidity of the piano frame. This was partly to take care of the greater size due to the adding of bass strings, but chiefly to permit of greater tension. The quality and persistency of the vibration depends to a great extent on the tension of the strings. Other things being equal, the excellence of the tone increases (up to a certain limit) with the tension. This led gradually to the introduction of iron supports, and later to a solid cast iron or steel frame, though up to 1820 only wood was used in the body of the pianoforte, until the tension became so great and the pitch so high (for the sake of tonal brilliancy) that the wooden frame proved incapable of sustaining the strain. The average tension on each string is, in the modern piano, some one hundred and seventy-five pounds, and was up to recent times much higher. The present Steinway concert grand suffers a strain of more than twenty tons, and, under the higher pitch of former years, had to

DEVELOPMENT OF THE MODERN PIANOFORTE

stand thirty. The weight of the instrument itself is half a ton.

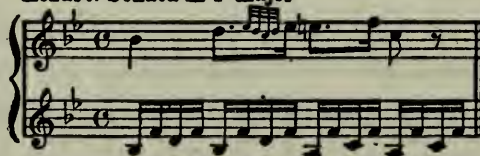
These improvements have made the piano second only to the orchestra for all around usefulness and expressiveness. The size of the instrument and the high tension of the strings made its tone sufficient for the largest concert hall, and permitted a keyboard range almost double that of the harpsichord. The individual dampers responsive to the pressure of the key made a quasi-legato and true melody playing possible. The rebounding hammer directly controlled by the key made possible all varieties of soft and loud tone. And the sustaining or damper, incorrectly called the loud pedal, made possible the sustaining of chords in great richness. The usefulness of this last device is still not half stated in saying that chords can be sustained; for, when all the strings are left open, there occurs a sympathetic vibration in the strings which are not struck by the hammers but are in tune with the overtones of the strings that are struck. This fact increases to an astonishing extent the resonance and sonority of any chords sounded with the help of the sustaining pedal. It makes the instrument almost orchestral in quality, opening to it an amazing range and variety of effect which Chopin, Liszt, and many piano writers after them, used with supreme and magical skill. The soft pedal opens another range of effects. On the grand piano it shifts the hammers so that they hit but one of the three strings proper to each note in the middle and upper registers. Hence the direction *una corda*, written in the pianoforte works of all great masters, including Beethoven.

The piano thus became an ideal sounding board for the romantic movement. It was capable of luscious expressive melody. It could obtain effects of great delicacy and intimate character. It could be loud, astonishing and orchestral. Its tone was in itself a thing of

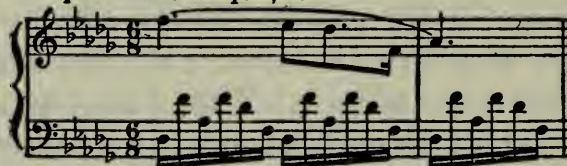
A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

sensuous beauty. Its freedom in harmony was no less than its freedom in melody, and enharmonic changes, beloved of all the romanticists, became easy. It allowed the greatest liberty in the disposition of notes, and harmonic accompaniment, with broken chords and arpeggios, could take on an absolute beauty of its own. This sufficiently explains the complete change in the method of writing clavier music in the nineteenth century. One example of the way in which Mozart and Chopin obtained harmonic sonority in accompaniments will show how far-reaching the change was.

Mozart: Sonata in F major



Chopin: Nocturne Op. 27, No 2



By the use of the damper pedal the Chopin formula gives the effect of a sustained chord. On the harpsichord it would have sounded like a few notes too widely scattered to be united in sonority.

With such an instrument every style of music became possible. Liszt asserted that he could reproduce any orchestral effect on it, and many of the best orchestral works of his time became generally known first through his pianoforte arrangements of them. Equally possible were the simple song-like melodies of some of Chopin's preludes, or the whimsical genre pieces of Schumann. As a consequence the wonderful piano literature of the nineteenth century is equal to any music in range, power, and emotional expressiveness.

II

Nearly all the qualities of romantic music find their beginnings in Beethoven. But it is not always easy to disentangle the romantic from the classical element in his music, and for convenience we begin the history of the romantic period with Schubert and Weber. For the specific and conscious tendencies of romanticism first showed themselves in the fondness for smaller free pianoforte forms, which Beethoven cultivated not at all, if we omit his historically negligible *Für Elise* and one or two other pieces of the same sort. Beethoven's later sonatas, while romantic in their breaking through the classic form and seeking a more intense emotional expression, are rather the prophets of romanticism than its ancestors.

When Schubert dared to write lovely pieces without any reference to traditional forms he began the history of romantic piano music. This he did in his lovely *Impromptus*, opus 90, and the famous *Moments musicaux*, both published in the year of his death, 1828. The *Impromptus* were not so named by the composer, but the title can well stand. They are essentially improvisations at the piano. They were written not to suit any form, nor to try any technical task, but simply because the composer became fascinated with his musical idea and wanted to work it out, which is true (theoretically at least) of all romantic music. In the very first of the *Impromptus*, that in C minor, we can almost see Schubert running his fingers over his piano, timidly experimenting with the discovery of a new tune, his childlike delight at finding it a beautiful one, and his pleasure in lingering over lovely cadences and enharmonic changes, or in working out new forms for his melody. The very first note—the octave G struck fortissimo—is a note for the pianoforte and not for clavi-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

chord or harpsichord. For it is held, and with the damper pedal pressed down, so that the other strings may join in the symphony in sympathetic vibration. And throughout the piece this G seems to sound magically as the dominant around which the whole harmony centres as toward a magnet. In other words, we are meeting in this first Impromptu our old Romantic friend, sensuous tone. The pleasure which Schubert takes in repeating the G, either by inference or in fact, or in swelling his chords by the use of the pedal, or in drawing out melodic cadences, or in coaxing out the reverberating tones of the bass, or in letting his melodic tone sound as though from the human voice—this, we might almost say, marks the discovery of the pianoforte by the nineteenth century. And it is equally romanticism's growing realization of itself.

All the impromptus are of great beauty, and all are unmistakably of Schubert. They have the fault of improvisations in that they are too long, but if one is in a leisurely mood to receive them, they never become a bore. The *Moments musicals* are still more typical of Schubert's genius—some of them short, ending suddenly almost before the hearer is aware that they have begun, but leaving behind a definite, clear-cut impression like a cameo. They are the ancestors of all the genre pieces of later times. Each of them might have a fanciful name attached, and each has the directness of genius. Schubert's sonatas are important only in their possession of the qualities of the Impromptus and *Moments musicals*. They are filled with beauties, but as sonatas—as representatives of classical organization and logic—they are negligible. Schubert cannot resist the charm of a lovely melody, and, when he finds one, the claims of form retire into the background. Certain individual movements are of high excellence, but played consecutively they are uneven. The 'Fantasia' in C minor (containing one of the themes from Schubert's

song, 'The Wanderer,') is a fine imaginative and technical work, but its freedom of form is of no historical importance, as Mozart wrote a long fantasia in C that was even more daring. The dances, likewise, have no significance in point of form, being written altogether after the usual manner of the day (they were, in fact, mostly pot boilers), but they contain at times such appealing beauty that they helped to dignify the dance as a type of concert piano music. The ability to create the highest beauty *in parvo* is distinctive of the romantic movement, and Schubert's dances and marches have stimulated many another composer to simplicity of expression. The influence of them is evident in the *Carnaval* and the *Davidsbündler Tänze* of Schumann. Liszt elaborated them and strung several together for concert use, and the waltzes of Brahms, who, more perhaps than any other, admired Schubert and profited by him, are derived directly from those of Schubert.

Liszt may be quoted once more, in his rhetorical style, but with his sympathetic understanding that never misses the mark: 'Our pianists,' he says, 'hardly realize what a noble treasure is to be found in the clavier music of Schubert. The most of them play him through *en passant*, notice here and there repetitions and retards—and then lay them aside. It is true that Schubert himself is partly responsible for the infrequent performance of his best works. He was too unconsciously productive, wrote ceaselessly, mingling the trivial and the important, the excellent and the mediocre, paying no heed to criticism and giving his willfulness full swing. He lived in his music as the birds live in the air and sang as the angels sing—oh, restlessly creative genius! Oh, faithful hero of my youthful heaven! Harmony, freshness, power, sympathy, dreaminess, passion, gentleness, tears, and flames stream from the depths and heights of your soul, and

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

in the magic of your humanity you almost allow us to forget the greatness of your mastership!’

Along with Schubert, Weber stands as the progenitor of the modern pianoforte style. (The comparative claims of the two can never be evaluated.) Here, again, it was Liszt who chiefly made the importance of the man known to the world. He took loving pains in the editing of Weber’s piano works late in his life, and, with conscientious concern for the composer’s intention, wrote out amplified paraphrases of many of the passages to make them more effective in performance. The absolute value of these works, especially the sonatas, is much disputed. It is customary to call them structurally weak, and at least reputable to call them indifferent in invention. Yet we are constantly being reminded in them that their author was a genius, and the genius who composed *Der Freischütz*. Certainly they deserve more frequent performance. As sonatas, they are, on the whole, more brilliant and more adequate than Schubert’s. Single movements, such as the andante of the A flat sonata, opus 39, can stand beside Beethoven in emotional dignity and tender beauty. But, whatever is the absolute musical value of these works, they are an advance on Beethoven in one particular, the quality which the Germans describe with the word *klaviermässig*—suited to the piano. For Beethoven, with all the daring of his later sonatas, got completely away from the harpsichord method of writing only to write for piano in orchestral style. He never began to exhaust the qualities of the pianoforte which are distinctive of the instrument. Weber’s writing is more for the pianoforte. Especially Weber enriched piano literature with dramatic pathos and romantic tone coloring, with vigorous harmony and expressive song-like melody. The famous ‘Invitation to the Dance’ shows him at his best, giving full play to his love of the simple and folk-like

SCHUBERT AND WEBER

tune, separating the hands and the fingers, and slashing brilliant streaks of light and shade in the piano keyboard. The famous *Konzertstück*, a great favorite of Liszt, and the concerto, once the rival in popularity of Chopin's, are rapidly slipping back into the gloom of a forgotten style. As show pieces they pointed the way to further development of pianoforte technique; but that which made them brilliant is now commonplace, the stock in trade of even third-rate pianists; and the genuine emotional warmth which has made much of Schubert's pianoforte works immortal is absent in these *tours de force* of Weber.

Historically Schubert leads the way to the piano style of Schumann, and Weber to that of Liszt, and both in company to the great achievements of the romantic period. But their style is a long way from modern pianoforte style—much more closely related to Beethoven than to Chopin. The dependence on the damper pedal for harmonic effects, the extreme separation of the notes of a broken chord, the striving for excessive power by means of sympathetic vibrations of the strings, and, in general, the *pointillage* use of notes as spots of color in the musical picture, are only in germ in their works. The chorale method of building up harmonies by closely adjacent notes still continues to the detriment of the best pianistic effect. But in the work of the composers immediately following we find the qualities of the piano developed almost to the limit of possible effect.

III

Keyboard music now tended more and more away from the old chorale and polyphonic style, in which eighteenth century music was 'thought,' toward a style which could take its rise from a keyed instrument with

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

pedals. Weber and Schubert achieved only at times this complete freedom in their clavier music. It remained for Schumann, Liszt, and Chopin to reveal the peculiar richness of the piano. Their styles are widely differentiated, yet all truly pianistic and supplementary one to the other. The differences can be derived from the personalities and the outward lives of the three men. Schumann was the unrestrained enthusiast, who was prevented by an accident from becoming a practising virtuoso and was obliged to do his work in his work-room and his inner consciousness. Liszt was, above all, the man of the world, the man who loved to dominate people by his art and understood supremely well how to do it. Chopin was by nature too sensitive ever to be a public virtuoso; he reflected the Paris of the thirties in terms of the individual soul where Liszt reflected it in terms of the crowd. Each of them loved his piano 'as an Arab his steed,' in Liszt's words. Hence Schumann's music, while supremely pianistic, has little concern for outward effect, and was, in point of fact, slow in winning wide popularity. With an influential magazine and a virtuoso wife to preach and practise his music in the public ear, Schumann nevertheless had to see the more facile Mendelssohn win all the fame and outward success. Schumann's reputation was for many years an 'underground' one. But he was too much a Romantic enthusiast to make any concessions to the superficial taste of the concert hall or drawing room, and continued writing music which sounded badly unless it was very well played, and even then rather austere separated the sheep from the goats among its hearers. Schumann is, above all, the pianists' pianist. The musical value and charm of his works is inextricably interwoven with the executant's delight in mastering it.

Liszt is, of course, no less the technician than Schumann—in fact, much more completely the technician

SCHUMANN'S PIANOFORTE MUSIC

in his earlier years. But his was less the technique of pleasing the performer than of pleasing the audience. With a wizardry that has never been surpassed he hit upon those resources of the piano which would dazzle and overpower. Very frequently he adopts the too easy method of getting his effect, the crashing repeated chord and the superficial fireworks. None of Schumann's technical difficulties are without their absolute musical value; all of Liszt's, whether they convey the highest poetry or the utmost banality, are directed toward the applause of the crowd.

Chopin is much more than the elegant salon pianist, which is the part of him that most frequently conditions his external form. He was the sensitive harpstring of his time, translating all its outward passions into terms of the inward emotions. Where Schumann had fancy Chopin had sentiment or emotion. Chopin had little of Schumann's vivid interest in experimenting in pianistic resources for their own sake. Even his *Études* are so preëminently musical, and have so little relation to a pianistic method, that they show little technical enthusiasm in the man. Chopin was interested in the technical possibilities of the piano only as a means of expressing his abounding sentiments and emotions. It is because he has so much to express and such a great variety of it that his music is of highest importance in the history of piano technique, and is probably the most subtly difficult of all pianoforte music. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that there are twenty pianists who can play the Liszt studies to one who can play those of Chopin. The technical demands he makes upon his instrument are always just enough to present his musical message and no more. Though he was utterly and solely of the piano (as neither Schumann nor Liszt was) he had neither the executant nor the public specifically in mind when he composed.

Schumann's first twenty-six published works (cov-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

ering most of the decade from 1830 to 1840) were almost exclusively for the piano. From the beginning he showed his instinct for its technical possibilities. Opus 1, published in November, 1831, was a set of variations, the theme being the musical 'spelling' of the name of a woman friend of his, the 'Countess Abegg,' perhaps as much a product of the imagination as was the music itself. The variations show the crudities of dilettantism, as well as its enthusiasm and courage. They were far from being the formal mechanical variations of classical clavier music. No change of the theme but has a musical and expressive beauty apart from its technical ingenuity. Especially they reveal a vivid sense of what the piano could do as distinguished from what the clavichord or harpsichord could do. Much better was opus 2, the *Papillons*, or 'Butterflies,' which is still popular on concert programs. All that is typical of Schumann the pianist is to be found in some measure in this opus 2. For, besides the vivid joy they reveal in experimentation with pianistic effects, there is the fact that they came, by way of Schumann's colorful imagination, out of literature. Here was romanticism going full tilt. From his earliest years Schumann had adored his Jean Paul. He had equally adored his piano. When he read the one he heard the other echoing. This was precisely the origin of the *Papillons*, as Schumann confessed in letters to his friends. The various dances of opus 2 are the portions of the masked dance of the conclusion of Jean Paul's *Flegeljahre*—not as program music, nor even as pictorial music, but in the vaguest way the creation of the sensitive musician under the stimulus of literature. Schumann attached no especial value to the fanciful titles which he gave much of his piano music; in his later revisions of it he usually withdrew them altogether. He always insisted that the music and not the literature was the important thing in his music.

SCHUMANN'S PIANOFORTE MUSIC

The names which betitle his music were often afterthoughts. They were nearly always given in a playful spirit. The literary music of Schumann is not in the least music which expresses literature, but only music written by a sensitive musician under the creative stimulus of literature.

The 'Butterflies' of opus 2 (*Papillons*) are by no means the flittering, showy butterflies common to salons of that day. They are free and fanciful dances, rich in harmonic and technical device, and rich especially in buoyant high spirits. The canons, the free melodic counterpoint, the recurrence of passages to give unity to the series, the broken or rolling chords, the spicy rhythmical devices, the blending of voices in a manner quite different from the polyphonic style of old, and the use of single anticipatory or suspended notes for changes of key—these gave evidence of what was to be the nature of Schumann's contribution to piano literature.

From now on until 1839, when Schumann began to be absorbed in song writing, there appeared at leisurely intervals piano works from his study, few of which are anything short of creations of genius. In the *Intermezzi* his technical preoccupations were given fuller play; in the *Davidsbündler Tänze* our old friends 'Florestan,' 'Eusebius,' and 'Meister Raro' contribute pieces in their own special vein, all directed to the good cause of 'making war on the Philistines'—in other words, asserting the claims of lovely music against those of mechanical music, and of technically scholarly music against those of sentimental salon music. Following this work came the *Toccata*, one of Schumann's earliest serious works later revised—an amazing achievement in point of technical virtuosity, based on a deep knowledge of Bach and polyphonic procedure, yet revealing the new Schumann in every bar. It proved that the young revolutionist who was emphasiz-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

ing musical beauty over musical learning was not doing so because he was technically unequipped.

He now wrote the *Carnaval*, perhaps the most popular of Schumann's piano works, with Schumann's friends, including Clara Wieck, Chopin, and Paganini, appearing among the 'musical pictures.' Schumann's humor is growing more noisy, for in the last movement the whole group join in an abusive 'march against the Philistines,' to the tune of the old folk-song, 'When Grandfather Married Grandmother.' Why should an avowed revolutionist take as his patron theme a song which praises the good old times 'when people knew naught of Ma'm'selle and Madame,' and deprecates change? But the romanticists, especially of Schumann's type, prided themselves on nothing more than their historical sense and their kinship with the past—especially the German past.

Next came more ambitious piano works, and interspersed among them the *Phantasiestücke* ('Fantasy Pieces'), containing some of Schumann's most characteristic numbers, and the brilliant 'Symphonic Études,' masterpieces one and all. And still later the 'Novellettes,' the *Faschingsswank*, the well-known 'Scenes from Childhood,' and the *Kreisleriana*. This group Schumann felt to be his finest work. It was taken, like the *Papillons*, from literature, this time E. T. A. Hoffmann's tales of the eccentric Kapellmeister Kreisler.

It is worth while to recall Hoffmann's story, as an example of the sort of literature to which Schumann responded musically. In Dr. Bie's words:* 'The garden into which the author leads us is full of tone and song. The stranger comes up to the young squire and tells him of many distant and unknown lands, and strange men and animals; and his speech dies away into a wonderful tone, in which he expresses unknown and mys-

* Oskar Bie: 'A History of the Pianoforte and Pianoforte Players,' Chap. VIII.

SCHUMANN'S PIANOFORTE MUSIC

terious things, intelligibly, yet without words. But the castle maiden follows his enticements, and they meet every midnight at the old tree, none venturing to approach too near the strange melodies that sound therefrom. Then the castle maiden lies pierced through under the tree, and the lute is broken, but from her blood grow mosses of wonderful color over the stone, and the young Chrysostom hears the nightingale, which thereafter makes its nest and sings its song in the tree. At home his father is accompanying his old songs on the clavicymbal, and songs, mosses, and castle maiden are all fused in his mind into one. In the garden of tone and song all sorts of internal melodies rise in his heart, and the murmur of the words gives them their breath. He tries to set them to the clavier, but they refuse to come forth from their hiding places. He closes the instrument, and listens to see whether the songs will not now sound forth more clearly and brightly; for "I knew well that the tones must dwell there as if enchanted." Out of a world like this floated all sorts of compositions in Schumann's mind. . . . A thousand threads run from all sides into this intimate web in which the whole lyrical devotion of a musical soul is interwoven. The piano is the orchestra of the heart. The joys and sorrows which are expressed in these pieces were never put into form with more sovereign power. For the external form Bach gave the impulse; for the content, Hoffmann. The garlanded roses of the middle section of No. 1, the shimmering blossoms of the 'inverted' passage in the *Langsamer* of No. 2, the immeasurable depth of the emotions in the slow pieces (4 and 6), the bass unfettered by accent, in the last bars of No. 8, leading down to final whisperings, all are among the happiest of inspirations.'

It will be noticed that most of the piano works of Schumann which we have mentioned are series of

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

short pieces. Some of the series, notably the *Papillons*, the *Carnaval*, and *Kreisleriana*, are held loosely together by a literary idea. The twenty little pieces which constitute the *Carnaval* have, moreover, an actual relation to each other, in that all of them contain much the same melodic intervals. Three typical sequences of intervals, which Schumann called 'Sphinxes,' are the groundwork of the *Carnaval*, but very subtly disguised. That *Pierrot*, *Arlequin*, the *Valse Noble*, *Florestan*, and *Papillons* are thus closely related is likely to escape even the careful listener; and these are perhaps the clearest examples. But this device of 'Sphinxes,' and other devices for uniting a long series of short pieces, really accomplish Schumann's purpose. On the other hand, they never give to the works in question the broad design and the epic continuity of the classical sonata at its best. The Beethoven sonatas opus 101 and 110, for example, are carved out of one piece. The Schumann cycles are many jewels exquisitely matched and strung together. The skill in so putting them together was peculiarly his, and is the more striking in that each little piece is separately perfect.

In general, it may be said that Schumann was at his best when working on this plan. The power over large forms came to him only later, after most of his pianoforte music had been written. The two sonatas, one in F sharp and one in G minor, both belong to the early period; and both, in spite of most beautiful passages, are, from the standpoint of artistic perfection, unsatisfactory. In neither are form and content properly matched. Exception must be made, however, for the *Fantasia* in C major, opus 17. Here, what was uncertainty or insincerity becomes an heroic freedom by the depth of ideas and the power of imagination which so found expression. The result is a work of immeasurable grandeur, unique in pianoforte literature.

MENDELSSOHN AS PIANOFORTE COMPOSER

After his marriage to Clara Wieck Schumann gave most of his attention to music for voice and for orchestra. In this later life belongs the concerto for piano and orchestra. No large concert piece in all piano literature is more truly musical and less factitious; no large work of any period in the history of music shows more economy in the use of musical material and means. In it Schumann is as completely sincere as in his smaller pieces, and, in addition, reveals what came more into view in his later years—the fine reserve and even classic sense of fitness in the man.

Mendelssohn as piano composer is universally known by his 'Songs Without Words,' a title which he invented in accordance with the fashion of the time. Like all the rest of his music, these pieces are less highly regarded now than a few decades ago. Modern music has passed far beyond the romanticism of the first half of the last century, and the 'Songs Without Words,' with all their occasional charm, have no one quality in sufficient proportion to make them historical landmarks. They are never heard on concert programs; their chief use is still in the instruction of children. Their finish and fluidity would not plead very strongly for them if it were not for the occasional beauty of their melodies. They remain chiefly as an indication of the better dilettante taste of the time. And, as Mr. Krehbiel has pointed out,* we should give generous credit to the music which was engagingly simple and honest in a time when the taste was all for superficial brilliance.

But Mendelssohn as a writer for the pianoforte is at his best in the Scherzos, the so-called 'Elf' or 'Kobold' pieces, a type in which he is in his happiest and freshest mood. One of these is a 'Battle of the Mice,' 'with tiny fanfares and dances, all kinds of squeaks, and

* 'The Pianoforte and Its Music,' Chap. X.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

runnings to and fro of a captivating grace.' Another is the well-known 'Rondo Capriccioso,' one of his best. In these 'fairy pieces' Mendelssohn derives directly from Schubert and the *Moments musicaux*. In the heavier pianoforte forms Mendelssohn had great vogue in his day, and Berlioz tells jestingly how the pianos at the Conservatory started to play the Concerto in G minor at the very approach of a pupil, and how the hammers continued to jump even after the instrument was demolished.

IV

The quality of the musical taste which Chopin and in part Liszt were combatting is forcibly brought out in the 'Recollections of the Life of Moscheles,' as quoted by Dr. Bie.* 'The halls echo with jubilations and applause,' he says, 'and the audiences, especially the easily kindled Viennese, are enthusiastic in their cheers; and music has become so popular and the compositions so banal that it seldom occurs to them to condemn shallowness. The dilettantes push forward, the circle of instruction widens the cheaper and better the pianos become. They push themselves into rivalry with the artists, in great concerts. From professional piano-playing—and they often played at two places in an evening—the artists took recreation with the good temper which never failed in those years. The great singer Malibran would sit down to the piano and sing the "Rataplan" and the Spanish songs, to which she would imitate the guitar on the keyboard. Then she would imitate famous colleagues, and a Duchess greeting her, and a Lady So-and-so singing "Home, Sweet Home" with the most cracked and nasal voice in the world. Thalberg would then take his seat and

* 'The Pianoforte and Pianoforte Players,' Chap. VII.

Frédéric Chopin
From a study by Delacroix





FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN

play Viennese songs and waltzes with "obligato snaps." Moscheles himself would play with hand turned round, or with the fist, perhaps hiding the thumb under the fist. In Moscheles' peculiar way of playing the thumb used to take the thirds under the palm of the hand.'

The piano recital of modern times was then unknown. It was not until 1838 that Liszt dared give a recital without the assistance of other artists, and it was not Liszt's music so much as his overshadowing personality that made the feat possible then. Chopin, coming to Paris under excellent auspices, had little need to make a name for himself in the concert hall under these conditions, and, as we may imagine, had still less zest for it. He was chiefly in demand to play at private parties and aristocratic salons, where he frequently enough, no doubt, met with stupidity and lack of understanding, but where, at least, he was spared the noisy vulgarity of a musical vaudeville. Taking the best from his friends, and selecting the excellent from the atmosphere of the salons which he adorned, Chopin went on composing, living a life which offers little color to the biographer. By the time he had reached Paris in 1831 he had several masterpieces tucked away in his portfolio, but, though perfectly polished, they are of his weaker sentimental style. The more powerful Chopin, the Chopin of the polonaises, the ballades, the scherzos, and some of the preludes, was perhaps partly the result of the intimacy with George Sand, whose personality was of the domineering, masculine sort. But more probably it was just the development of an extraordinarily sensitive personality. At any rate, it was not long after his arrival in Paris that Chopin's creative power had reached full vigor.

After that the chronology of the pieces counts for little. They can be examined by classes, and not by

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

opus numbers, except for the posthumous pieces (following opus 65), which were withheld from publication during the composer's life by his own wish, and were meant by him to be burned. They are, in almost every case, inferior to the works published during his lifetime. The works, grouped together, may be summed up as follows: over fifty mazurkas, fifteen waltzes, nearly as many polonaises, and certain other dances; nineteen nocturnes, twenty-five preludes, twenty-seven études, four ballades, four scherzos, five rondos, three impromptus, a berceuse, a barcarolle, three fantasias, three variations, four sonatas, two piano concertos, and a trio for piano and strings. All his works, then, except the Polish songs mentioned in the last chapter, are written primarily for the piano, a few having other instruments in combination or orchestral accompaniment, but the vast majority for piano alone.

The dances are highly variable in quality. Of the many mazurkas, some are almost negligible, while a few reveal Chopin's use of the Polish folk-manner in high perfection. They are not a persistent part of modern concert programs. The waltzes, on the other hand, cannot be escaped; they are with us at every turn in modern life. Theorists have had fine battles over their musical value; some find in them the most perfect art of Chopin, and others regard them as mere glorified, superficial salon pieces. Certainly they concede more to mere outward display than do most of his compositions, and the themes sometimes border on the trivial. The posthumous waltzes are like Schubert's in that they are apt to be thin in style with occasional rare beauties interspersed. Of the remaining waltzes, the most pretentious, such as the two in A flat, are extremely brilliant in design, offering to the executant, besides full opportunity for the display of dexterity, innumerable chances for nuance of

FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN

effect (which are, of course, frequently abused, so that the dances become disjointed and specious caricatures of music). The waltz in A minor is far finer, containing the true emotional Chopin, by no means undignified in the dance form. No less fine is the hackneyed C-sharp minor waltz, in which the opportunities for legitimate refinement and variety of interpretation are infinite. These waltzes retain little of the feeling of the dance, despite the frequent buoyancy of their rhythm. Chopin was interested in emotional expression and extreme refinement of style; it mattered little to him by what name his piece might be called.

The Polonaises are a very different matter. Here we find a type of heroic expression which Liszt himself could not equal. The fine energy of the 'Military' polonaise in A major is universally known. The sound and fury of this piece is never cheap; it is the exuberant energy of genius. Even greater, if possible, are the polonaises in F sharp minor and in A flat major. No element in them falls below absolute genius. All of Liszt's heroics never evoked from the piano such superb power. The sick and 'pathological' Chopin which is described to us in music primers is here hardly to be found—only here and there a touch of moody intensity, which is, however, never repressive. The Chopin of the waltzes and nocturnes would have been a man of weak and morbid refinement, all the more unhealthy because of his hypersensitive finesse. But, when we have added thereto the Chopin of the Polonaises, we have one of the two or three greatest, if not the very greatest, emotional poet of music. The Polonaises will stand forever as a protest against the supposition that Chopin's soul was degenerate.

The traditional 'sick' Chopin is to be found *ipsissimus* in the Nocturnes, the most popular, with the waltzes, of his works. In such ones as those in E flat or G the sentiment is that of a lad suffering from

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

puppy-love and gazing at the moon. From beginning to end there is scarcely a bar which could correspond to the feelings of a physically healthy man. Yet we must remember that this sort of sentiment was quite in the fashion of the time. Byron had created of himself a myth of introspective sorrow. Only a few decades before, the Werther of Goethe's novel, committing suicide in his suit of buff and blue, was being imitated by love-sick swains among all the fashionable circles which sought to do the correct thing. Chateaubriand and Jean Paul had cast their morbid spell over fashionable society, and this spell was not likely to pass away from the hectic Paris of the thirties while there were such men as Byron and Heine to bind it afresh each year with some fascinating book of verse. From such an influence a highly sensitive man like Chopin could not be altogether free. There is something in every artistic nature which can respond sympathetically to the claims of the morbid, for the reason that the artist is a man to feel a wide variety of the sensations that pertain to humanity. No one of the great creative musicians of the time was quite free from this morbid strain; in the sensitive, retiring Chopin it came out in its most effeminate guise. But the point is, it did not represent the whole of the man, nor necessarily any essential part of him. It was the response of his nervous organism to certain of the influences to which he was subject. Chopin may have been physiologically decadent or psychologically morbid; it is hardly a question for musicians. But his music, taken as a whole, does not prove a nature that was positively unhealthy. Its persistent emphasis of sensuousness and emotion makes it doubtless a somewhat unhealthy influence on the nerves of children; but the same could be said of many of the phases of perfectly healthy adult life. And, whatever may be the verdict concerning Chopin, we must admire the manner in which he

FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN

held his powerful emotional utterance within the firm restraint of his aristocratic sense of fitness. If he has sores, he never makes a vulgar display of them in public.

The Preludes have a bolder and profounder note. They are the treasure-house of his many ideas which, though coming from the best of his creative spirit, could not easily find a form or external purpose for themselves. We may imagine that they are the selected best of his improvisation on his own piano, late at night. Some of them, like the prelude in D flat major (the so-called 'raindrop' prelude) he worked out at length, with conscientious regard for form. Others, like that in A major, were just melodies which were too beautiful to lose but were seemingly complete just as they stood. The marvellous prelude in C-sharp minor is the ultimate glorification of improvisation with all the charm of willful fancy and aimlessness, and all the stimulation of a sensitive taste which could not endure having a single note out of place. The Preludes are complete and unique; a careful listener can hear the whole twenty-six successively and retain a distinct impression for each. This is the supreme test of style in a composer, and in sense of style no greater composer than Chopin ever lived.

The Études deserve their name in that they are technically difficult and that the performer who has mastered them has mastered a great deal of the fine art of the pianoforte. But they are the farthest possible from being études in the pedagogical sense. It is quite true that each presents some particular technical difficulty in piano playing, but the dominance of this technical feature springs rather from the composer's sense of style than from any pedagogical intent. Certainly these pieces could not be more polished, or in most cases, more beautiful, whatever their name and purpose. They may be as emotional as anything of Cho-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

pin's, as the 'Revolutionary' étude in C minor, which, tradition says, was written in 1831 when the composer received news of the fall of Warsaw before the invading Russians. The steady open arpeggio of the bass is supposed to represent the rumble of conflict, and the treble melody alternately the cries of rage of the combatants and the prayers of the dying. But for the most part the Études are pure grace and 'pattern music,' with always that morose or emotional undercurrent which creeps into all Chopin's music. The peculiar virtue of the Études, apart from their interest for the technician, consists in their exquisite grace and freedom combined with perfection of formal pattern.

In the miscellaneous group of larger compositions, which includes the Ballades, the Scherzos, the Fantasias, the Sonatas, and the Concertos, we find some of Chopin's greatest musical thoughts. The Ballades are the musical narration of some fanciful tale of love or adventure. Chopin supplied no 'program,' and it is probable that he had none in mind when he composed them. But they tease us out of thought, making us supply our own stories for the musical narration. They have the power of compelling the vision of long vistas of half-remembered experiences—the very mood of high romance. The Scherzos show Chopin's genius playing in characteristic perfection. They are not the 'fairy scherzos' of Mendelssohn, but vivid emotional experiences, and Schumann could well say of the first, 'How is gravity to clothe itself if jest goes about in dark veils?' Though they seem to be wholly free and fantastical in form, they yet are related to the traditional scherzo, not only in their triple rhythm, but in the general disposition of musical material. Traces of the old two-part song form, in which most of the scherzos of Beethoven were written, are evident, and also of the third part, called the Trio. On the other hand,

FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN

elaborate transitional passages from one part back to another conceal or enrich the older, simpler form, and in all four there is a coda of remarkable power and fire. The Fantasia in B minor, long and intricate, is one of the most profoundly moving of all Chopin's works; it leaves the hearer panting for breath, as though he had waked up from an experience which had sapped the energy of his soul. As for the Sonatas and the Concertos, Chopin's detractors have tried to deny them any particular merit—or any excellence except that of incidental beauties. The assertion will hardly stand. Chopin's strength was not in large-scale architecture, nor in what we might call 'formal form.' But the sonatas and concertos have a way of charming the hearer and freeing his imagination in spite of faulty structure, and one sometimes feels that, had a few more of them been written, they would have created the very standards of form on which they are to be judged. The famous 'Funeral March' was interpolated as a slow movement of the B flat minor sonata, with which it is always heard. Liszt's eulogy of this may seem vainly extravagant to our materialistic time, but it represents exactly what happens to any one foolish enough to try to put into words the emotions stirred up by this wonderful piece.

Chopin, as we have said, played little in public. He said the public scared him. When he did play people were wont to complain that he could not be heard. They were used to the bombastic tone of Kalkbrenner. Chopin might have remedied this defect and made a successful concert performer out of himself, but his physical strength was always delicate and his artistic conscience, moreover, unwilling to permit forcing or grossness; so he continued to play too 'softly.' The explanation was his delicate finger touch, coming entirely from the knuckles except where detached chords were to be taken, when the wrists, of course,

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

came into play. Those who were so fortunate as really to *hear* Chopin's playing had ecstasies of delight over this pearly touch, which made runs and florid decorations sound marvellously liquid and flute-like. No other performer before the public could do this. Chopin's pupils were in this respect never more than pupils.

People complained, on hearing Chopin's music played by others, that it had no rhythm, that it was all *rubato*. The inaccuracy of this was evident when Chopin played his own compositions. For the melody, the ornament, of the right hand might be *rubato* as it pleased, but beneath it was a steady, almost mechanical operation of the left hand. It was a part of Chopin's conscious method, and it is said he used a metronome in practising. The point is worth emphasizing because of the way it illuminates Chopin's fine sense of self-control and fitness.

No technical method was ever more accurately suited to its task than Chopin's. He grew up in the atmosphere of the piano, and 'thought piano' when composing music. He then drew on this and that piano resource until, by the time he had ended his short life, he had revealed the greater part of its potential musical possibilities—and always in what he had needed in the business of expressing his musical thoughts. With him the piano became utterly freed from the last traces of the tyranny of the polyphonic and chorale styles. But he supplied a polyphony of his own, the strangest, eeriest thing imaginable. It was the combination of two or three melodies, widely different and very beautiful, sometimes with the harmonic accompaniment added, sometimes with the harmony rising magically out of the counterpoint, but always in a new manner that was utterly pianistic. Chopin carried to its extreme the widely broken chord,

FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN

as in the accompaniment to the major section of the 'Funeral March.'

But it was in the art of delicate figuration (borrowed in the first place from Hummel) that Chopin was perhaps most himself. This, with Chopin, can be contained within no formula, can be described by no technical language. It was inexhaustible; it was eternally fluid, yet eternally appropriate. It somehow fused the utmost propriety of mood with the utmost grace of pattern. Even when it is most abundant, as in the F sharp major nocturne, it never seems exaggerated or in bad taste.

Harmonically Chopin was an innovator, at times a radical one. Here, again, he seemed to appropriate what he needed for the matter in hand, and exhibit no experimental interest in what remained. His free changes of key are graceful rather than sensuous, as with Schubert, and, when the modulation grows out of quasi-extemporaneous embellishment, as in the C sharp minor prelude, it melts with an ease that seems to come quite from the world of Bach. The later mazurkas anticipate the progressive harmonies of Wagner.

Much of his manner of playing, as well as the notion of the nocturne, Chopin got from the Scotchman, Field, who had fascinated European concert halls with his dreaming, quiet performance, and with the free melody of the nocturne genre which he had invented. From Hummel, as we have said, Chopin borrowed his embellishment, and from Cramer he chose many of the fundamentals of pianistic style. From the Italians (Italian opera included) he received his taste for long-drawn, succulent melody; in the composer of 'Norma' we see a poor relation of the aristocratic Pole. Thus from second and third-rate sources Chopin borrowed or took what he needed. He was surrounded by first-rate men, but dominated by none. He took

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

what he wanted where he found it, but only what he wanted. He was constantly selecting—and rejecting. Therein he was the aristocrat.

This is the place to make mention of several writers for the piano whose works were of importance in their day and occasionally to-day appear upon concert programs. Stephen Heller,* slightly younger than Chopin, and, unlike the Pole, blessed with a long life, wrote in the light and graceful style which was much in vogue, yet generally with sufficient selective sense to avoid the vapid. About the same can be said for Adolph Henselt (1814-1889), whose *étude*, 'If I Were a Bird,' still haunts music conservatories. His vigorous concerto for piano is also frequently played. William Sterndale Bennett, who, after his student years in Leipzig, became Mendelssohn's priest in England, wrote four concertos, a fantasia with orchestra, a trio, and a sonata in F minor. His work is impeccable in form, often fresh and charming in content, but without radical energy of purpose—precisely Mendelssohn's list of qualities. Finally, we may mention Joachim Raff (1822-1882), writer of a concerto and a suite, besides a number of smaller pieces which show programmatic tendencies.

V

Liszt, the supreme virtuoso of the piano, is the Liszt who wrote about three-fourths of the compositions which bear his name. The other fourth, or perhaps a quarter share of the whole, comes from another Liszt, a great poet, who could feel the values of whole nations as Chopin could feel the values of individual souls. It is not a paradox to say that Liszt was so utterly master of the piano that he was a slave to it. With it he won a place for himself among counts and

* B. Pesth, 1814; d. Paris, 1888.

FRANZ LISZT VIRTUOSO AND POET

princesses, storming a national capital with twenty-four concerts at a single visit by way of variety between flirtations. Having so deeply in his being the pianistic formulas for conquering, it was inevitable that when he set out to do other tasks the pianistic formula conquered him. So it is, at least, in much of his music, which, with all its supreme pianistic skill, is sometimes pretty worthless music. Only, apart from this Liszt of the piano, there always stood that other Liszt—the one who, as he tells us in his book on gypsy music, slept in the open fields with the gypsies, studied and noted their tunes, and felt the great sweeps of nature as strongly as he felt the great sweeps of history. Both Liszts must be kept in mind if we would understand his piano works.

Liszt's piano style was quite the opposite of Chopin's. The Pole played for a few intimate friends; the Hungarian played for a vast auditorium. He had the sense of the crowd as few others have ever had it. His dazzling sweeps of arpeggios, of diatonic and chromatic runs, his thunderous chords, piling up on one another and repeated in violent succession, his unbelievable rapidity of finger movement, his way of having the whole seven octaves of the keyboard apparently under his fingers at once—in short, his way of making the pianoforte seem to be a whole orchestra—this was the Liszt who wrote the greater part of what we are about to summarize briefly.

Liszt's piano style was not born ready made. Although he captured Paris as an infant prodigy when he first went there, he had an immense amount of maturing and developing to do. 'It is due in great measure to the example of Paganini's violin playing that Liszt at this time, with slow, deliberate toil, created modern piano playing,' says Dr. Bie. 'The world was struck dumb by the enchantment of the Genoese violinist; men did not trust their ears; something uncanny,

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

inexplicable, ran with this demon of music through the halls. The wonder reached Liszt; he ventured on *his* instrument to give sound to the unheard of; leaps which none before him had ventured to make, "disjunctions" which no one had hitherto thought could be acoustically united; deep tremolos of fifths, like a dozen kettle-drums, which rushed forth into wild chords; a polyphony which almost employed as a rhythmical element the overtones which destroy harmony; the utmost possible use of the seven octaves in chords set sharply one over another; resolutions of tied notes in unceasing octave graces with harmonies hitherto unknown of the interval of the tenth to increase the fullness of tone-color; a regardless interweaving of highest and lowest notes for purposes of light and shade; the most manifold application of the tone-colors of different octaves for the coloration of the tone-effect; the entirely naturalistic use of the tremolo and the glissando; and, above all, a perfect systematization of the method of interlacing the hands, partly for the management of runs, so as to bring out the color, partly to gain a doubled power by the division, and partly to attain, by the use of contractions and extensions in the figures, a fullness of orchestral chord-power never hitherto practised. This is the last step possible for the piano in the process of individualization begun by Hummel and continued by Chopin.'

The earliest of Liszt's published études, published in 1826, are now difficult to obtain. They were the public statement of his pianistic creed, the ultimatum, so to speak, of the most popular pianist of the day to all rivals. They seemed to represent the utmost of pianistic skill. Then, in 1832, came Paganini to Paris, and Liszt, with his customary justice toward others, recognized in him the supreme executant, and, what was more significant, the element of the true artist. Inevitably the experience reacted on his own art. He

FRANZ LISZT VIRTUOSO AND POET

adapted six of Paganini's violin caprices for piano, achieving a new 'last word' in pianoforte technique. These studies still hold their place in piano concerts, especially the picturesque 'Campanella.' In 1838 Liszt sought to mark the progress of his pianism to date by publishing a new arrangement of his earliest études, under the name of *Études d'exécution transcendante*. These, while primarily technical studies, are also the work of a creative artist. The *Mazeppa* was a symphonic poem in germ (later becoming one in actuality). The *Harmonies du Soir*, experimenting with 'atmospheric' tone qualities on the piano, is an ancestor of the modern 'impressionistic' school. The *Étude Héroïque* foreshadows the *Tasso* and *Les Préludes*. The significant thing in this is the way in which Liszt's creative impulse grew out of his mastery of the piano.

A predominant part of Liszt's earlier activity has in recent times passed into comparative insignificance. We are nowadays inclined to sneer at his pompous arrangements of everything from Beethoven symphonies and Bach preludes to the popular operas of the day. But these arrangements, by which his pianistic method chiefly became known, were equally important in their effect on pianism and on musical taste. The name and fame of Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* went out among the nations chiefly through Liszt's playing of his arrangement of it. Schubert's songs, likewise, which one would suppose were possible only for the voice, were paraphrased by Liszt with such keen understanding of the melodic resources of the piano, and such pious regard for the intentions of Schubert, that Liszt's piano was actually the chief apostle of Schubert's vocal music through a great part of Europe. Liszt was similarly an apostle of Beethoven's symphonies. It is eternally to his credit that Liszt, though in many ways an aristocrat in spirit, was never a musical snob; his paraphrases of Auber's and

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

Bellini's operas showed as catholic a sense of beauty as his arrangements of Beethoven. He could bow to the popular demand for opera *potpourris* without ever quite descending to the vulgar level of most pianists of his day, though coming perilously near it. His arrangements were always in some degree the work of a creative artist, who could select his themes and develop them into an artistic whole. They were equally the work of an interpretive artist, for they frequently revealed the true beauties and meanings of an opera better than the conductors and singers of the day did.

As Liszt travelled about the world on his triumphal tours, or sojourned in the company of the Countess d'Agoult in Switzerland, he sought to confide his impressions to his piano. These impressions were published in the two volumes of the 'Years of Pilgrimage,' poetic musical pictures in the idiom of pianistic virtuosity. The first of these pieces was written to picture the uprising of the workmen in Lyons, following the Paris revolution of 1830. Thereafter came impressions of every sort. The chapel of William Tell, the Lake of Wallenstein, the dances of Venice or Naples, the reading of Dante or of Petrarch's sonnets—all gave him some musical emotion or picture which he sought to translate into terms of the piano. The musical value of these works is highly variable, but at their best, as in certain of the grandiose Petrarch sonnets, they equal the best of his symphonic poems. In these works, too, his experiments in radical harmony are frequent, and at times he completely anticipates the novel progressions of Debussy—whole-toned scale and all. Along with the 'Years of Pilgrimage' may be grouped certain other large compositions for the piano, such as the two 'Legends' of St. Francis, the six 'Consolations,' the brilliant polonaises, the fascinating 'Spanish Rhapsody,' and the grandiose *Funerailles*.

FRANZ LISZT VIRTUOSO AND POET

All of these works are still frequently played by concert pianists.

The two grand concertos with orchestra—in E flat major and A major—are of dazzling technical brilliancy. In the second in particular the pianistic resource seems inexhaustible. The thematic material is in Liszt's finest vein and the orchestral accompaniment is executed in the highest of colors. In the second, too, Liszt not only connects the movements, as was the fashion of the day, but completely fuses them, somewhat in the manner that a Futurist painter fuses the various parts of his picture. Scherzo, andante, and allegro enter when fancy ordains, lasting sometimes but a moment, and returning as they please. In the same way is constructed the superb pianoforte sonata in B minor, a glorious fantasy in Liszt's most heroic style. It is commonly said that as a sonata this work is structurally weak; it would be truer to say that as a sonata it has no existence. It is the nobility of the work, in its contrapuntal and pianistic mastery, that carries conviction.

The Hungarian Rhapsodies, perhaps Liszt's most typical achievement, are universally known. They were the outcome of his visit to his native land in 1840, and of the notes he made at the time from the singing of the gypsies. His book, 'The Gypsies and Their Music,' is well worth reading for any who wish to know the real impulse behind the Rhapsodies. Liszt, beyond any of his time, understood the æsthetic and ethical import of folk-music, and knew how to place it at the foundation of all other music whatsoever. Without such an appreciation he could not have caught so accurately the distinctive features of Hungarian music and developed them through his fifteen rhapsodies without ever once losing the true flavor. In them the gypsy 'snap,' the dotted notes, the instrumental character, the extreme emphasis on rhythm, and the

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

peculiar oriental scales become supremely expressive. Liszt is here, as he aspired to be, truly a national poet. The Lasso or slow movement of the second, and every note of the twelfth, the national hymn and funeral march which open the fourteenth, are a permanent part of our musical heritage. On the other hand, their real musical value is unhappily obscured by virtuoso display. They are, first and foremost, pieces for display, however much genuine life and virility the folk melodies and rhythms on which they are based may give them. As such they find their usual place at the end of concert programs, to suit the listener who is tired of really listening and desires only to be taken off his feet by pyrotechnics; as well as to furnish the player his final opportunity to dazzle and overpower.

VI

The romantic age produced many works in the quieter forms of chamber music, but, perhaps because these forms were quieter, was not at its best in them. Nearly all the German composers of the period, save Liszt, wrote quantities of such music. The string quartet was comparatively under a cloud after Schubert's death, suffering a decline from his time on. But no quartets, save those of Beethoven, are finer than Schubert's. He brought to them in full power his genius for melody. Moreover, he showed in them a genius for organization which he did not usually match in his other large works. In the best of his quartets he escaped the danger to which a lesser melodist would have succumbed—that of incontinently putting a chief melody into the first violin part and letting the remaining instruments serve as accompaniment. In no musical type are all the voices so absolutely equal as in the string quartet; the composer who unduly stresses any

CHAMBER MUSIC OF THE ROMANTIC PERIOD

one of the four is false to the peculiar genius of the form. But Schubert feels all the parts: he gives each its individuality, not in the close polyphonic manner of Bach, but in the melodist's manner of writing each voice with an outline that is distinctive. In these works the prolixity which so often beset him is purged away; the musical standard is steadily maintained. The movements show steady development and coherence. The instruments are admirably treated with reference to their peculiar possibilities. Often the quartets are highly emotional and dramatic, though they never pass beyond the natural limitations of this peculiarly abstract type of music. In his search for color effects, too, Schubert frequently foreshadows the methods and feelings of modern composers, but these effects, such as the tremolo climax, are not false to the true nature of the instruments he is using. Some of Schubert's chamber works still hold their place in undiminished popularity in concerts. A few make use of the melodies of some of his best songs, such as 'The Wanderer,' 'Death and the Maiden,' and *Sei mir gegrüsst*. The best are perhaps those in A minor, G major, and D minor. To these we must add the great C major quintet, which uses the melody of 'The Trout' in its last movement.

Contemporary with Schubert, and outliving him by a number of years was Ludwig Spohr (1784-1859), whose quartets number as many as those of Mozart and Beethoven put together. The only one which still holds its place in concert programs is that in G minor, opus 27. His quartets have the personal faults and virtues of their composer, being somewhat tenuous and mannered, and inclined to stress solo virtuosity. Schumann's early quartets, especially the three in opus 41, show him very nearly at his best. These, written in the early years of his married life, after a deliberate study of the quartets of Beethoven, are thoroughly workmanlike, and are eminently successful as experi-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

ments in direct and 'aphoristic' expression. They rank among the best in string quartet literature. Not so much can be said for those of Mendelssohn. They were, of course, immensely popular in their time. But, though their style is polished, their content is not creative in the finer sense. And, strangely enough, their composer frequently committed in them faults of taste in his use of the instruments. The best to be said of them, as of much of the rest of Mendelssohn's music, is that they were of immense value in refining and deepening the musical taste of the time, when the greater works of every type were caviar to the general.

In addition to the quartets of the romantic period we should mention the vast quantity of chamber music written for various combinations of instruments. Spohr in particular was very prolific, and his combinations were sometimes highly unusual. For instance, he has to his credit a nonet, four double quartets, a 'nocturne' for wind and percussion instruments, a sextet for strings and a concerto for string quartet with orchestral accompaniment. Mendelssohn's octet for strings, opus 22, is fresh and interesting, especially in the scherzo, where the composer is at his best. And, to follow the great trios (piano, violin, and 'cello) of Beethoven, we have two trios, D minor and C minor, by Mendelssohn, and three trios, in D minor, F major, and G minor, by Schumann, of which the first is the best. The later Schumann sonatas for violin show only too clearly the composer's declining powers.

The romantic period was naturally the time for great pianoforte concertos. Weber, in his two concertos, in C and E flat, and in his *Concertstück* for piano and orchestra, foreshadowed the spirit of great concertos that followed, though his technique was still one of transition. Mendelssohn's concerto in G minor was for years the most popular of show pieces in conservatories, though it has since largely dropped out of use.

(His *Capriccio*, however, is still familiar and beautiful.) But the great concerto of the period, and one of the great ones of all time, was Schumann's in A minor. This was originally written as a solo piece of moderate length, but broadened into a concerto of three distinct though joined movements, each representing the best of Schumann's genius. No concerto ever conceded less to mere display, or maintained a more even standard of musical excellence. And to-day, though the technical brilliance is somewhat dimmed by comparison with more modern works, the idealistic sincerity of the lovely concerto speaks with unlessened vigor. Numerous other concertos for pianoforte were composed and were popular in the period we are discussing, but most of them have dropped out of use, except for the instruction of conservatory students. Among them we may mention the concerto in F minor by Adolph Henselt (1814-1889), one of the famous virtuosos of the time, whose work is exceedingly pianistic, elaborate and graceful, but somewhat pedantic and lacking in force; that in A flat by John Field (1782-1837); that in C sharp minor by Ferdinand Ries (1784-1838); that in F minor by Sterndale Bennett (1816-1875); that in F sharp minor by Ferdinand Hiller (1811-1885), a famous virtuoso of the time, who was closely identified with the work and activities of some of the greatest composers; and that in C minor by Joachim Raff (1822-1882). Chopin's two concertos, composed in his earliest years of creative activity, are uneven, but in parts reveal the genius of their composer and justly maintain their somewhat limited popularity in modern concerts.

Ludwig Spohr, whom Rupert Hughes calls one of 'the first of second-best composers,' was a virtuoso of the violin, and it is chiefly through his writing for that instrument that he retains what position he has in modern times. He first became known as a violinist

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

and constantly showed his predilection for the instrument in his writings. In his day he seemed a dazzling genius, with his eleven operas, his nine symphonies, and his great oratorio 'The Last Judgment.' Yet these have hardly more than a historical value to-day—except for the quiet pleasure they can give the student who takes the trouble to examine the scores. It is as a composer for the violin that Spohr continues to speak with some authority. His seventeen concertos still enter largely into the training of young violin virtuosos, and figure to a considerable though diminishing extent in concerts. As a master of the violin Spohr represents the old school. His bowing, when he played, was conservative. He drew from his instrument a broad singing quality of tone. All his writing shows his intimacy with the instrument of his personal triumphs. It has been said that 'everything turned to a concerto at his touch.' His style, however, was not lurid, but rather delicate and nuanced. Presently he was eclipsed by Paganini,* a genius who was half charlatan, who stopped short of no trick with his instrument provided it might procure applause. Spohr could see nothing but the trickster in this man who thrilled Liszt and who has left several pieces which are to-day in constant use and are not scorned by the best of musicians. Spohr, however, had an individuality which could not blend with that of the meteoric virtuoso. In some respects he is extraordinarily modern. His harmony was continually striving for peculiar and colorful effects. He was addicted, in a mild way, to program music, and gave titles to much of his music, such as the 'Seasons' symphony. But his genius always stopped short of the epoch-making quality of supreme creativeness.

In violin literature we must mention one more work,

* Niccolò Paganini, the greatest of all violin virtuosos, was born in 1782 in Genoa, and died, 1840, in Nizza.

LUDWIG SPOHR AND OTHERS

one which has never been surpassed in beauty of workmanship and which remains one of the great things of its kind in all music. This is Mendelssohn's concerto. It is, outside of the concert overtures, the one work of his which has not sunk materially in the eyes of musicians since its first years. Its themes, though not robust, are of the very highest beauty. Its technical qualities make it one of the best beloved of works to violinists. And its unmatched polish and balance of architecture make it a constant joy to concert audiences.

H. K. M.

CHAPTER IX

ORCHESTRAL LITERATURE AND ORCHESTRAL DEVELOPMENT

The perfection of instruments; emotionalism of the romantic period; enlargement of orchestral resources—The symphony in the romantic period; Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann; Spohr and Raff—The concert overture—The rise of program music; the symphonic leit-motif; Berlioz's *Fantastique*; other Berlioz symphonies; Liszt's dramatic symphonies—The symphonic poem; *Tasso*; Liszt's other symphonic poems—The legitimacy of program music.

I

Most typical of the romantic period—more typical even than its art of song—was its orchestral music. Here all that was peculiar to it—individuality, freedom of form, largeness of conception, sensuousness of effect—could find fullest development. The orchestra in its eighteenth-century perfection was a small, compact, well-ordered body of instruments, in which every emphasis was laid on regularity and balance. The orchestra of Liszt's or Berlioz's dramatic symphonies was a bewildering collection of individual voices and romantic tone qualities. It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that, whereas a Haydn symphony was a chaste design in lines, a Liszt symphony was a gorgeous tapestry of color. Between the two every instrument had been developed to the utmost of tonal eloquence which composers could devise for it. The number of kinds of instruments had been doubled or trebled, thanks partly to Beethoven, and the size of the orchestra in common use had been increased at least once over. The technique of orchestral instruments had increased astonishingly; Schubert's C major sym-

PERFECTION OF INSTRUMENTS

phony, which was declared unplayable by the orchestra of the Vienna Musikverein, one of the best of the age, is a mere toy compared with Liszt's or Berlioz's larger works. Such instruments as the horns and trumpets were greatly improved during the second and third decades of the century, so that they could take a place as independent melodic voices, which had been almost denied them in Beethoven's time. As an instrument of specific emotional expression the orchestra rose from almost nil to its present position, unrivalled save by the human voice.

It is doubtless true to say that this enlargement resulted from the technical improvements in orchestral instruments and from the increase of instrumental virtuosity, but the converse is much more true. The case is here not so much as with the piano, that an improved instrument tempted a great composer to write for it, but rather that great composers needed more perfect means of expression and therefore stimulated the technicians to greater efforts. For, as we have seen, the musical spirits of the romantic period insisted upon breaking through conventional limitations and expressing what had never before been expressed. They wanted overpowering grandeur of sound, impressive richness of tone, great freedom of form, and constant variety of color. They wanted especially those means which could make possible their dreams of pictorial and descriptive music. Flutes and oboes in pairs and two horns and two trumpets capable of only a partial scale, in addition to the usual strings, were hardly adequate to describe the adventures of Dante in the Inferno. The literary and social life of the time had set composers thinking in grand style, and they insisted upon having the new and improved instruments which they felt they needed, upon forcing manufacturers to inventions which should facilitate complicated and extended passages in the wind, and the per-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

formers to the acceptance of these new things and to unheard-of industry in mastering them. Thus the mere external characteristics of romantic orchestral music are highly typical of the spirit of the time.

Perhaps the most typical quality of all is the insistence upon sensuous effect. We have seen how the denizens of the nineteenth century longed to be part of the things that were going on about them, how, basing themselves on the 'sentimental' school of Rousseau, they considered a truth unperceived until they had *felt* it. This distinction between contemplating life and experiencing it is one of the chief distinctions between the classical and the romantic spirit everywhere, and between the attitude of the eighteenth century and that of the nineteenth in particular. When Rousseau offered the feelings of his 'new *Héloïse*' as justification for her conduct, he sent a shock through the intelligent minds of France. He said, in substance: 'Put yourself in her place and see if you wouldn't do as she did. Then ask yourself what your philosophic and moral disapproval amounts to.' Within some fifty years it became quite the craze of polite society to put itself in the new *Héloïse*'s place, and George Sand did it with an energy which astonished even France.

Now, when one commences thoroughly to reason out life from one's individual feelings, it becomes necessary to reconstruct philosophy—namely, to construct it 'from the bottom up,' from the demands and relations of the individual up to the constitution of the mass. And it is quite natural that when insistence is thus laid on the individual point of view the senses enter into the question far more largely than before. At its most extreme this view comes to an unrestrained license for the senses—a vice typical of Restoration France. But its nobler side was its desire to discover how the other man felt and what his needs were, in place of reasoning on abstract grounds how he 'ought'

ENLARGEMENT OF ORCHESTRAL RESOURCES

to act. Besides, since the French Revolution people had been experiencing things so incessantly that they had got the habit. After the fall of Napoleon they could not consent to return to a calm observation of events. Rather, it was precisely because external events had calmed down that they so much more needed violent experience in their imaginative and artistic life. The classic tragedies of the French 'golden age' were indeed emotional and in high degree, but the emotions were those of types, not of individuals. They were looked on as grand æsthetic spectacles rather than as appeals from one human being to another. It was distinctly bad form to show too much emotion at a tragedy of Racine's; whereas in the romantic period tears were quite in fashion. However great the human falsity of the romantic dramas, they at least pretended to be expressions of individual emotions, and were received by their audiences as such. The life of a follower of the arts in Paris in the twenties and thirties (or anywhere in Europe, for that matter) was one of laughing and weeping in the joys and sorrows of others, moving from one emotional debauch to another, and taking pride in making the feelings of these creations of art as much as possible one's own. It was small wonder, then, that musicians did the same; that, in addition to trying to paint pictures and tell stories, they should endeavor to make every stroke of beauty *felt* by the auditor, and felt in a physical sensuous thrill rather than in a philosophic 'sense of beauty.'

And nothing could offer the romantic musicians a finer opportunity for all this than the timbres of the orchestra. The soft golden tone of the horn, the brilliant yellow of the trumpet, the luscious green of the oboe, the quiet silver white of the flute seemed to stand ready for the poets of the senses to use at their pleasure. In the vibrating tone of orchestral instruments,

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

even more than in complicated harmonies and appealing melodies, lay their chance for titillating the nerves of a generation hungry for sensuous excitement. But we must remember that if these instruments have poetic and colorful associations to us it is in large measure because there were romantic composers to suggest them. The horn and flute and oboe had been at Haydn's disposal, yet he was little interested in the sensuous characteristics of them which we feel so acutely. In great measure the poetic and sensuous tone qualities of the modern orchestra were brought out by the romantic composers.

The classical orchestra, as we have seen in an earlier chapter, had originally been based on the 'string quartet'—namely, the first violins, the second violins, the violas, and the 'cellos, with the double basses reënforcing the 'cello part. The string section completely supported the musical structure. This was because the strings alone were capable of playing complete and smooth scales and executing all sorts of turns and trills with nearly equal facility. Wind instruments in the eighteenth century were in a very imperfect condition. Some of them, like the trumpets, were capable of no more than eight or ten notes. All suffered from serious and numerous restrictions. Hence they were originally used for giving occasional color or ornamentation to the music which was carried by the strings. About the middle of the century the famous orchestra of the court of Mannheim, under the leadership and stimulus of Cannabich and of the Stamitz family, reached something like a solid equilibrium in the matter of instrumentation, and from its disposition of the strings and wind all later orchestration took its rise. The Mannheim orchestra became renowned for its nuance of effect, and especially for its organized crescendos and diminuendos. The ideal orchestra thus passed on to Haydn and Mozart was a 'string quartet' with wood-

ENLARGEMENT OF ORCHESTRAL RESOURCES

wind instruments for the occasional doubling of the string parts, and the brass for filling in and emphasizing important chords. Gradually the wood-wind became a separate section of the orchestra, sometimes carrying a whole passage without the aid of strings, and sometimes combining with the string section on equal terms. With this stage modern instrumentation may be said to have begun. The brass had to wait; its individuality was not much developed until Beethoven's time.

Yet during the period of orchestral development under Haydn and Mozart the strings remained the solid basis for orchestral writing, partly because of their greater practical efficiency, and partly because the reserved character of the violin tone appealed more to the classic sense of moderation. And even with the increased importance of the wood-winds the unit of writing was the group and not the individual instrument (barring occasional special solos). The later history of orchestral writing was one of a gradually increasing importance and independence for the wood-wind section (and later for the brass) and of individualization for each separate instrument. Mozart based his writing upon the Mannheim orchestration and upon Haydn, showing considerable sensitiveness to timbres, especially that of the clarinet. Haydn, in turn, learned from Mozart's symphonies, and in his later works for the orchestra further developed freedom of writing, being particularly fond of the oboe. Beethoven emancipated all the instruments, making his orchestra a collection of individual voices rather than of groups (though he was necessarily hampered by the technically clumsy brass).

Yet, compared to the writing of Berlioz and Liszt, the classical symphonies were in their orchestration rather dry and monochrome (always making a reservation for the pronounced romantic vein in Beethoven).

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

Haydn and Mozart felt orchestral contrasts, but they used them rather for the sake of variety than for their absolute expressive value. So that, however these composers may have anticipated and prepared the way for the romanticists, the difference between the two orchestral palettes is striking. One might say it was the difference between Raphael's palette and Rubens'. And in mere externals the romanticists worked on a much larger scale. The string orchestra in Mozart's time numbered from twenty-two to thirty instruments, and to this were added usually two flutes and two horns, and occasionally clarinets, bassoons, trumpets, and kettle-drums in pairs. Beethoven's orchestra was little larger than this, and the capabilities of his instruments only slightly greater, but his use of the various instruments as peculiar and individual voices was masterly. All the great composers of the second quarter of the nineteenth century studied his instrumentation and learned from it. But Beethoven, though he sought out the individual character of orchestral voices, did not make them sensuously expressive as Weber and Liszt did. About the time of Beethoven's death the use of valves made the brass possible as an independent choir, capable of performing most of the ordinary diatonic and accidental notes and of carrying full harmony. But it must be said that even the most radical of the romantic composers, such as Berlioz, did not avail themselves of these improvements as rapidly as they might, and were characteristic rather in their way of thinking for instruments than in their way of writing for them. The valve horns and valve trumpets came into use slowly; Schumann frequently used valve horns plus natural horns, and Berlioz preferred the vulgar *cornet à pistons* to the improved trumpet.

But the romantic period added many an instrument to the limited orchestra of Mozart and Beethoven.

ENLARGEMENT OF ORCHESTRAL RESOURCES

Clarinets and trombones became the usual thing. The horns were increased to four, and the small flute or piccolo, the English horn, and the bass clarinet (or the double bassoon), and the ophicleide became frequent. Various instruments, such as the 'serpent,' the harp, and all sorts of drums were freely introduced for special effects.

Berlioz especially loved to introduce unusual instruments, and quantities of them. For his famous 'Requiem' he demanded (though he later made concessions): six flutes, four oboes, six clarinets, ten bassoons, thirty-five first and thirty-five second violins, thirty 'cellos, twenty-five basses, and twelve horns. In the *Tuba Mirum* he asks for twelve pairs of kettle-drums, tuned to cover the whole diatonic scale and several of the accidentals, and for four separate 'orchestras,' placed at the four corners of the stage, and calling for six cornets, five trombones, and two tubas; or five trumpets, six ophicleides, four trombones, four tubas, and the like. His scores are filled with minute directions to the performers, especially to the drummers, who are enjoined to use a certain type of drum-stick for particular passages, to place their drum in a certain position, and so on. His directions are curt and precise. Liszt, on the other hand, leaves the matter largely to 'the gracious coöperation of the director.'

Experimentation with new and sensational effects made life thrilling for these composers. Berlioz recalls with delight in his Memoirs an effect he made with his arrangement of the 'Rackoczy March' in Buda Pesth. 'No sooner,' says he, 'did the rumor spread that I had written *hony* (national) music than Pesth began to ferment. How had I treated it? They feared profanation of that idolized melody which for so many years had made their hearts beat with lust of glory and battle and liberty; all kinds of stories were rife, and at last there came to me M. Horwath, editor of a

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

Hungarian paper, who, unable to curb his curiosity, had gone to inspect my march at the copyist.'

'“I have seen your Rakoczy score,” he said, uneasily.

'“Well?”

'“Well, I feel horribly nervous about it.”

'“Bah! Why?”

'“Your motif is introduced piano, and we are used to hearing it fortissimo.”

'“Yes, by the gypsies. Is that all? Don't be alarmed. You shall have such a forte as you never heard in your life. You can't have read the score carefully; remember the end is everything.”

'All the same, when the day came my throat tightened, as it did in times of great excitement, when this devil of a thing came on. First the trumpets gave out the rhythm, then the flutes and clarinets, with a pizzicato accompaniment of strings—softly outlining the air—the audience remaining calm and judicial. Then, as there came a long crescendo, broken by the dull beats of the big drum (as of distant cannon), a strange restless movement was perceptible among them—and, as the orchestra let itself go in a cataclysm of sweeping fury and thunder, they could contain themselves no longer. Their overcharged souls burst with a tremendous explosion of feeling that raised my hair with terror.'

This bass-drum beat pianissimo 'as of distant cannon' has never to this day lost its wild and mysterious potency. But it must not be supposed that the romantics' contribution to orchestration consisted mainly in isolated sensational effects. Their work was marvellously thorough and solid. Berlioz in particular had a wizard-like ear for discerning and developing subtleties of timbre. His great work on Orchestration (now somewhat passé but still stimulating and valuable to the student) abounds in the mention of them. He points out the poetic possibilities in the lower regis-

THE SYMPHONY IN THE ROMANTIC PERIOD

ters of the clarinets, little used before his day. He makes his famous notation as to the utterly different tone qualities of one violin and of several violins in unison, as though of different instruments. And so on through hundreds of pages. The scores of the romanticists abound in simple effects, unheard of before their time, which gain their end like magic. Famous examples come readily to mind: the muted violins in the high registers in the 'Dance of the Sylphs' from 'The Damnation of Faust'; the clumsy bassoons for the dance of the 'rude mechanicals' in Mendelssohn's incidental music to 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'; the morose viola solo which recurs through Berlioz's 'Harold in Italy'; the taps and rolls on the tympani to accompany the speeches of the devil in *Der Freischütz* or the flutes in their lowest register in the accompaniment to Agathe's air in the same opera—all these are representative of the richness of poetic imagination and understanding of orchestral possibilities in the composers of the romantic period.

II

It was inevitable that the pure symphonic form should decline in esteem during the romantic period; for it is based primarily on a love of pure design—the 'da capo' scheme of statement, development, and re-statement, which remains the best method ever invented for vividly presenting musical ideas without extra-musical association or aid. It is primarily a mold for receiving 'pure' musical material, and the romantic period, as we have seen, had comparatively little use for music without poetic association. Of the best symphonies of the time the greater part have some general poetical designation, like the 'Italian' and 'Scotch' symphonies of Mendelssohn, or the 'Spring' and 'Rhenish' symphonies of Schumann. These titles

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

were in some cases mere afterthoughts or concessions to the demands of the time, and in every case the merest general or whimsical suggestion. Yet they can easily be imagined as fitting the musical material, and they always manage to add interest to the work without interfering with the 'absolute' musical value. And even when they are without specific title they are infused with the spirit of the age—delight in sensuous effects and rich scoring, emotional melody, and varied harmonic support.

For all this, as for nearly everything else in modern music, we must go back to Beethoven if we wish to find the source, but for purposes of classification Schubert may be set down as the first romantic symphonist. He adhered as closely as he could to the classical mold, though he never had a predominant gift for form. A beautiful melody was to him the law-giver for all things, and when he found such a melody it went its way refusing to submit to the laws of proportion. Yet this willfulness can hardly be regarded as standing in the way of outward success; the 'Unfinished' symphony in B minor could not be better loved than it is; it is safe to say that of all symphonies it is the most popular. It was written (two movements and a few bars of a scherzo) in 1822, was laid aside for no known reason, and lay unknown in Vienna for many years until rescued by Sir George Grove. The mysterious introduction in the 'cellos and basses, as though to say, 'It happened once upon a time'; the haunting 'second theme' introduced by the 'cellos; the stirring development with its shrieks of the wood-wind—all are of the very stuff of romantic music. A purist might wish the work less diffuse, especially in the second movement; no one could wish it more beautiful. In the great C major symphony, written in the year of his death, Schubert seems to have been attempting a *magnum opus*. If he had lived, this work would cer-

SCHUBERT, MENDELSSOHN, SCHUMANN

tainly have been regarded as the first composition of his 'second period.' He labored over it with much more care than was his custom, and showed a desire to attain a cogent form with truly orchestral ideas. The best parts of the 'Unfinished Symphony' could be sung by the human voice; the melodies of the C major are at home only with orchestral instruments. The work was all but unprecedented for its time in length and difficulty; it is Schubert's finest effort in sustained and noble expression, and, though thoroughly romantic in tone, his nearest approach to 'absolute' music. It seems outmoded and at times a bit childlike to-day, but by sheer beauty holds its place steadily on orchestral programs. Schubert's other symphonies have dropped almost completely out of sight.

Mendelssohn's four symphonies, including the 'Italian,' the 'Scotch,' and the 'Reformation,' have had a harder time holding their place. It seems strange that Mendelssohn, the avowed follower of the classics, should not have done his best work in his symphonies, but these compositions, though executed with extreme polish and dexterity, sound thin to-day. A bolder voice might have made them live. But the 'Scotch' and 'Italian' in them are seen through Leipzig spectacles, and the musical subject-matter is not vigorous enough to challenge a listener in the midst of modern musical wealth. As for the 'Reformation' symphony, with its use of the Protestant chorale, *Ein feste Burg*, a technically 'reformed' Jew could hardly be expected to catch the militant Christian spirit. Yet these works are at their best precisely in their romantic picturesqueness; as essays in the 'absolute' symphony they cannot match the nobility and strength of Schubert's C major.

Schumann, the avowed romantic, had much more of worth to put into his symphonies, probably because he was an apostle and an image-breaker, and not a

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

polite 'synthesist.' The 'Spring' symphony in B flat, written in the year of his marriage, 1840 (the year of his most exuberant productivity), remains one of the most beautiful between Beethoven and recent times. The austerity of the classical form never robbed him of spontaneity, for the ideas in his symphony are not inferior to any he ever invented. The form is, on the whole, satisfactory to the purist, and, beyond such innovations as the connecting of all four movements in the last symphony, he attempted little that was new. The four works are fertile in lovely ideas, such as the graceful folk-song intoned by 'cellos and wood-wind in the third, or the impressive organ-like movement from the same work. Throughout there is the same basic simplicity of invention—the combination of fresh melodic idea with colorful harmony—which endears him to all German hearts. It is customary to say that Schumann was a mere amateur at orchestration. It is certainly true that he had no particular turn for niceties of scoring or for searching out endless novelties of effect, and it is true that he sometimes proved himself ignorant of certain primary rules, as when he wrote an unplayable phrase for the horns in his first symphony. But his orchestration is, on the whole, well balanced and adequate to his subject-matter, and is full of felicities of scoring which harmonize with the romantic color of his ideas.

Of the other symphonists who were influenced by the romantic fervor the greater part have dropped out of sight. Spohr, who may be reckoned among them, was in his day considered the equal of Beethoven, and his symphonies, though often manneristic, are noble in conception, romantic in feeling, and learned in execution. Of a much later period is Raff, a disciple of Liszt, and, to some extent, a crusader on behalf of Wagner. Like Spohr, he enjoyed a much exaggerated reputation during his lifetime. Of his eleven sympho-

THE CONCERT OVERTURE

nies *Im Walde* and *Leonore* (both of a mildly programmatic nature) were the best known, the latter in particular a popular favorite of a generation ago. Raff further developed the resources of the orchestra without striking out any new paths. Many of his ideas were romantic and charming, but he was too often facile and rather cheap. Still, he had not a little to teach other composers, among them the American MacDowell. Gade, friend of Mendelssohn and his successor at Leipzig, was a thorough scholarly musician, one of the few of the 'Leipzig circle' who did not succumb to dry formalism. He may be considered one of the first of the 'national composers,' for his work, based to some extent on the Danish folk idiom secured international recognition for the national school founded by J. P. E. Hartmann. Ferdinand Hiller, friend of Liszt and Chopin, wrote three symphonies marked by romantic feeling and technical vigor, and Reinecke, for many years the representative of the Mendelssohn tradition at Leipzig, wrote learnedly and at times with inspiring freshness.

III

In the romantic period there developed, chiefly at the hands of Mendelssohn, a form peculiarly characteristic of the time—the so-called 'concert overture.' This was based on the classic overture for opera or spoken drama, written in sonata form, usually with a slow introduction, but poetic and, to a limited extent, descriptive, and intended purely for concert performance. The models were Beethoven's overtures, 'Coriolanus,' 'Egmont,' and, best of all, the 'Leonore No 3,' written to introduce a particular opera or drama, it is true, but summing up and in some degree following the course of the drama and having all the ear-marks of the later romantic overture. From a mere prelude

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

intended to establish the prevailing mood of the drama the overture had long since become an independent artistic form. These overtures gained a great popularity in concert, and their possibilities for romantic suggestion were quickly seized upon by the romantics.

Weber's overture to *Der Freischütz*, though written for the opera, may be ranked as a concert overture (it is most frequently heard in that capacity), and along with it the equally fine *Euryanthe* and *Oberon*. The first named was a real challenge to the Philistines. The slow introduction, with its horn melody of surpassing loveliness, and the fast movement, introducing the music of the Incantation scene, are thoroughly romantic. Weber's best known concert overture (in the strict sense), the *Jubel Ouverture*, is of inferior quality.

Schumann, likewise, wrote no overtures not intended for a special drama or a special occasion, but some of his works in this form rank among his best orchestral compositions. Chief among them is the 'Manfred,' which depicts the morbid passions in the soul of Byron's hero, as fine a work in its kind as any of the period. The 'Genoveva' overture is fresh and colorful in the style of Weber, and that for Schiller's 'Bride of Messina' is scarcely inferior. Berlioz has to his credit a number of works in this form, mostly dating from his earliest years of creative activity. Best known are the 'Rob Roy' (introducing the Scotch tune, 'Scots Wha' Hae') and the *Carnival Romain*, but the 'Lear' and 'The Corsair,' inspired by two of his favorite authors, Shakespeare and Byron, are also possessed of his familiar virtues. Another composer who in his day made a name in this form is William Sterndale Bennett, an Englishman who possessed the highest esteem of Mendelssohn and Schumann, and was a valuable part of the musical life of Leipzig in the thirties and later. The best part of his work, now forgotten save

THE CONCERT OVERTURE

in England, is for the piano, but the 'Parisina' and 'Wood Nymphs' overtures were at one time ranked with those of Mendelssohn. Like all English composers of those times he was inclined to the academic, but his work had much freshness and romantic charm, combined with an admirable sense of form.

But it is Mendelssohn whose place in this field is unrivalled. His 'Midsummer Night's Dream' overture, written when he was seventeen, has a place on modern concert programs analogous to that of Schubert's 'Unfinished Symphony.' This work is equally the delight of the musical purist and of the untechnical music-lover. It is marked by all Mendelssohn's finest qualities. Not a measure of it is slipshod or lacking in distinction. Its scoring is deft in the extreme. Its themes are fresh and charming. And upon it all is the polish in which Mendelssohn excelled; no note seems out of place, and none, one feels, could be otherwise than as it is. It is mildly descriptive—as descriptive as Mendelssohn ever was. The three groups of characters in Shakespeare's play are there—the fairies, the love-stricken mortals, and the rude mechanicals—each with its characteristic melody. The opening chords, high in the wood-wind, set the fanciful tone of the whole. For deft adaptation of the means to the end it has rarely been surpassed in all music. In his other overtures Mendelssohn is even less descriptive, being content to catch the dominant mood of the subject and transmit it into tone in the sonata form. 'Fingal's Cave,' the chief theme of which occurred to him and was noted down on the supposed scene of its subject in Scotland, is equally picturesque in its subject matter, but lacks the buoyant invention of its predecessor. The 'Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage' is a masterpiece of restraint. The technical means are exceedingly simple, for in his effort to paint the reigning quiet of his theme Mendelssohn dwells inordinately

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

upon the pure tonic chord. Yet the work never lacks its composer's customary freshness or sense of perfect proportion. His fourth overture—"To the Story of the Lovely Melusina"—is only second to the 'Midsummer Night's Dream' in popularity. In these works Mendelssohn is at his best; only the 'Elijah' and the violin concerto equally deserve long life and frequent repetition. For the overtures best show Mendelssohn the synthesist. In them he has caught absolutely the more refined spirit of romanticism, with its emphasis on tone coloring and its association of literary ideas, and has developed it in a classic mold as perfect as anything in music. Nowhere else do the dominating musical ideas of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries come to such an amicable meeting ground.

IV

Yet this 'controlled romanticism,' which Mendelssohn doubtless hoped would found a school, had little historical result. The frenzied spirits of the time needed some more vigorous stimulation, and those who had vitality sufficient to make history were not the ones to be guided by an academic gourmet. The Mendelssohn concert overtures are a pleasant by-path in music; they by no means strike a note to ring down the corridors of time. 'Controlled romanticism' was not the message for Mendelssohn's age; for this age was essentially militant, smashing idols and blazing new paths, and nothing could feed its appetite save bitter fruit.

This bitter fruit it had in full measure in Berlioz's romantic symphonies, as in Liszt's symphonic poems. Of the true romantic symphonies the most remarkable is Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*, one of the most astonishing productions in the whole history of music. It seems safe to say that in historical fruitfulness this

THE RISE OF PROGRAM MUSIC

work ranks with three or four others of the greatest—Monteverdi's opera *Orfeo*, in 1607; Wagner's *Tristan*, and what else? The *Fantastique* created program music; it made an art form of the dramatic symphony (including the not yet invented symphonic poem and all forms of free and story-telling symphonic works). At the same time it gave artistic existence to the *leit-motif*, or representative theme, the most fruitful single musical invention of the nineteenth century.

The *Fantastique* seems to have no ancestry; there is nothing in previous musical literature to which more than the vaguest parallel can be drawn, and there is nothing in Berlioz's previous works to indicate that he had the power to take a new idea—two new ideas—out of the sky and work them out with such mature mastery. One might have expected a period of experimentation. One might at least expect the work to be the logical outcome of experiments by other men. But Berlioz had no true ancestor in this form; he had no more than chance forerunners.

Nevertheless program music, or at least descriptive music, in some form or other, is nearly as old as music itself. We have part-songs dating from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries which imitate the cuckoo's call, or the songs of other birds. Jannequin, contemporary with Palestrina, wrote a piece descriptive of the battle of Marignan, fought between the French and the Swiss in 1515. Even Bach joins the other program composers with his 'Caprice on the departure of his brother,' in which the posthorn is imitated. Couperin gave picturesque titles to nearly all his compositions, and Rameau wrote a delightful piece for harpsichord, suggestively called 'The Hen.' Many of Haydn's symphonies have titles which add materially to the poetry of the music. Beethoven admitted that he never composed without some definite image in mind. His 'Pastoral Symphony' is so well

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

known that it need only be mentioned, though strict theorists may deny it a place with program music on the plea that, in the composer's own words, it is 'rather the recording of impressions than painting.' Yet Beethoven wrote one piece of downright program music in the strict sense, for his 'Battle of Vittoria' frankly sets out to describe one of the battles of the Napoleonic wars. It is, however, pure hack work, one of the few works of the master which might have been composed by a mediocre man. It is of a sort of debased program music which was much in fashion at the time, easy and silly stuff which pretended to describe anything from a landscape up to the battle of Waterloo. The instances of imitative music in Haydn's 'Creation' are well known. Coming down to later times we find the ophicleide imitating the braying of the ass in Mendelssohn's 'Midsummer Night's Dream' overture, and since then few composers, however reserved in manner and classic in taste, have wholly disdained it.

Yet all this long, even distinguished, history does not fully prepare the way for the program music of Berlioz. It is not likely that he was familiar with much of it. And even if he had been he could have found no programmistic form or idea ready at hand for his program pieces. The program music idea was rather 'in the air' than in specific musical works. From the literary romanticists' theory of the mixing of the genres and the mingling of the arts his lively mind no doubt drew a hint. And the influence of his teacher, Lesueur, at the Conservatory must be reckoned on. Lesueur was something of a radical and apostle of program music in his day, having been, in fact, relieved of his duties as director of music in Notre Dame because he insisted upon attuning men's minds to piety by means of 'picturesque and descriptive' performances of

THE SYMPHONIC LEIT-MOTIF

the Mass. Program music! Here was a true forerunner of Berlioz—a very bad boy in a very solemn church. Perhaps this accounts for Berlioz's veneration of his teacher, one of the few men who doesn't figure somewhat disgracefully in the *Memoirs*. At any rate, the young revolutionist found in Lesueur a sympathetic spirit such as is rarely to be found in conservatories.

To sum up, then, we find that Berlioz had no precedent in reputable music for a sustained work of a close descriptive nature. Works of picturesque quality, which specifically do not 'depict events'—like the 'Pastoral' symphony—are not program music in the more exact sense. Isolated bits of description in good music, like the famous 'leaping stag' and 'shaggy lion' of Haydn's 'Creation,' offer no analogy for sustained description. And the supposed pieces of sustained description, like the fashionable 'battle' pieces, had and deserved no musical standing. The *Fantastique*, as we shall see, was detailed and sustained description of the first rank musically. The gap between the *Fantastique* and its supposed ancestors was quite complete. It was bridged by pure genius.

As for the *leit-motif*, it is even more Berlioz's own invention. The use of a particular theme to represent a particular personage or emotion was, of course, in such program music as had existed. But only in a few isolated instances had this been used recurrently to accompany a dramatic story. Mozart, in *Don Giovanni*, had used the famous trombone theme to represent the Statue, first in the Graveyard scene and later in the Supper scene. Weber had somewhat loosely used a particular theme to represent the devil Samiel in *Der Freischütz*. We know from Berlioz's own description * how this work affected him in his early Parisian years and we may assume that the notion of

* 'Berlioz's *Memoirs*,' Chap. X.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

the leit-motif took hold on him then. But the leit-motif in Mozart and Weber is hardly used as a deliberate device, rather only as a natural repetition under similar dramatic conditions. The use of the leit-motif in symphonic music, and its variation under varied conditions belongs solely to Berlioz.

True to romantic traditions, Berlioz evolved the *Fantastique* out of his own joys and sorrows. It originated in the frenzy of his love for the actress, Henriette Smithson. He writes in February, 1830:*

‘Again, without warning and without reason, my ill-starred passion wakes. She is in London, yet I feel her presence ever with me. I listen to the beating of my heart, it is like a sledge-hammer, every nerve in my body quivers with pain.

‘Woe upon her! Could she but dream of the poetry, the infinite bliss of such love as mine, she would fly to my arms, even though my embrace should be her death.

‘I was just going to begin my great symphony (Episode in an Artist’s Life) to depict the course of this infernal love of mine—but I can write nothing.’

Why, this is very midsummer madness! you say. But the kind of madness from which came much good romantic music. For the work had been planned in the previous year, not long after Miss Smithson had rejected Berlioz’s first advances.

But the composer very soon found that he could write—and he wrote like a fiend. In May he tells a friend that the rehearsals of the symphony will begin in three days. The concert is to take place on the 30th. As for Miss Smithson, ‘I pity and despise her. She is nothing but a common-place woman with an instinct for expressing the tortures of the soul that she has never felt.’ Yet he wished that ‘the theatre people would somehow

* ‘Letters to Humbert Ferrand,’ quoted in Everyman English edition of the Memoirs, Chapters XV and XVI.

BERLIOZ'S 'FANTASTIQUE'

plot to get *her* there—that wretched woman! She could not but recognize herself.'

The performance of the symphony finally came off toward the end of the year. But in the meantime a new goddess had descended from the skies. The composer's marriage was to depend on the success of the concert—so he says. 'It must be a *theatrical* success; Camille's parents insist upon that as a condition of our marriage. I hope I shall succeed.

'P. S. That wretched Smithson girl is still here. I have not seen her.'

And a few weeks later: 'I had a frantic success. They actually encored the *Marche au Supplice*. I am mad! mad! My marriage is fixed for Easter, 1832. My blessed symphony has done the deed.'

But not quite. He was rewriting this same symphony a few months later in Italy when there came a letter from Camille's mother announcing her engagement to M. Pleyel!

As explanation to the symphony the composer wrote an extended 'program'—in the strictest modern sense. He notes, however, that the program may be dispensed with, as 'the symphony (the author hopes) offers sufficient musical interest in itself, independent of any dramatic intention.' The program of the *Fantastique* is worth quoting entire, since it stands as the prototype and model of all musical programs since:

'A young musician of morbid sensitiveness and ardent imagination poisons himself with opium in an excess of amorous despair. The narcotic dose, too weak to cause his death, plunges him into a heavy sleep, accompanied by the strangest visions, while his sensations, sentiments and memories translate themselves in his sick brain into musical thoughts and images. The loved one herself has become for him a melody, like a fixed idea which he rediscovers and hears everywhere.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

'First Part: Reveries, Passions. He first recalls that uneasiness of the soul, that wave of passions, those melancholies, those reasonless joys, which he experienced before having seen her whom he loves; then the volcanic love with which she suddenly inspired him, his frenzied heart-rendings, his jealous fury, his re-awakening tenderness, his religious consolations.

'Second Part: A Ball. He finds the loved one at a ball, in the midst of tumult and a brilliant fête.

'Third Part: In the Country. A summer evening in the country: he hears two shepherds conversing with their horns; this pastoral duet, the natural scene, the soft whispering of the winds in the trees, a few sentiments of hope which he has recently conceived, all combine to give his soul an unwonted calm, to give a happier color to his thoughts; but *she* appears anew, his heart stops beating, painful misapprehensions stir him—if she should deceive him! One of the shepherds repeats his naïve melody; the other does not respond. The sun sets—distant rolls of thunder—solitude—silence——

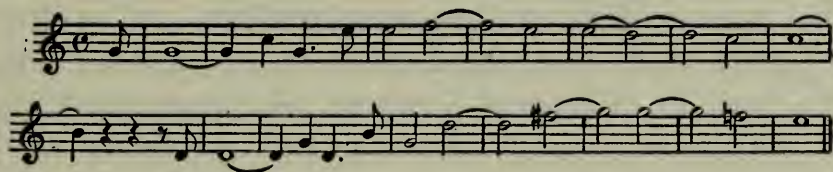
'Fourth Part: March to the Gallows. He dreams that he has killed his loved one, that he is condemned to death, led to the gallows. The cortège advances, to the sounds of a march now sombre and wild, now brilliant and solemn, in which a dull sound of heavy steps follows immediately upon the noisiest shouts. Finally, the fixed idea reappears for an instant like a last thought of love, to be interrupted by the fatal blow.

'Fifth Part: Dream of the Witches' Festival. He fancies he is present at a witches' dance, in the midst of a gruesome company of shades, sorcerers, and monsters of all sorts gathered for his funeral. Strange sounds, sighs, bursts of laughter, distant cries and answers. The loved melody reappears again; but it has lost its character of nobility and timidity; it is nothing

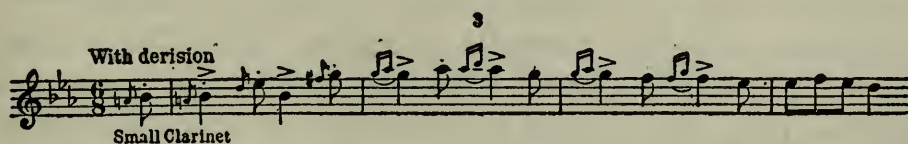
OTHER BERLIOZ SYMPHONIES

but an ignoble dance, trivial and grotesque; it is she who comes to the witches' festival. Sounds of joy at her arrival. She mingles with the hellish orgy; uncanny noises—burlesque of the *Dies Irae*; dance of the witches. The witches' dance and the *Dies Irae* follow.'

The music follows this program in detail, and supplies a host of other details to the sympathetic imagination. The opening movement contains a melody which Berlioz avers he composed at the age of twelve, when he was in love with yet another young lady, a certain Estelle, six years his senior. And in each movement occurs the 'fixed idea,' founder of that distinguished dynasty of leit-motifs in the nineteenth century:



In the opening movement, when the first agonies of love are at their height, this theme undergoes a long contrapuntal development which is a marvel of complexity and harmonic energy. It recurs practically unchanged in the next three movements, and at its appearance in the fourth is cut short as the guillotine chops the musician's head off. In the last movement it undergoes the change which makes this work the predecessor of Liszt's symphonic poems:



The structure of this work is complicated in the extreme, and it abounds in harmonic and contrapuntal novelties which are strokes of pure genius. Many a musician may dislike the symphony, but none can help

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

respecting it. The orchestra, though not large for our day, was revolutionary in its time. It included, in one movement or another (besides the usual strings) a small flute and two large ones; oboes; two clarinets, a small clarinet, and an English horn; four horns, two trumpets, two *cornets à pistons*, and three trombones; four bassoons, two ophicleides, four pairs of kettle-drums, cymbals, bells, and bass drum.

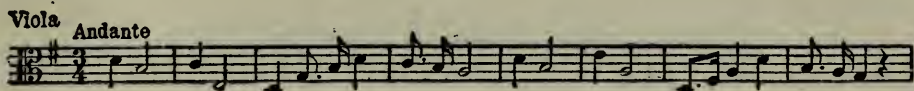
A challenge to the timid spirits of the time; and a thing of revolutionary significance to modern music.

The other great dramatic symphonies of the time belong wholly to Berlioz and Liszt. The Revolutionary Symphony which Berlioz had planned under the stimulus of the 1830 revolution, became, about 1837, the *Symphonie Funèbre et Héroïque*, composed in honor of the men killed in this insurrection. It is mostly of inferior stuff compared with the composer's other works, but the 'Funeral Sermon' of the second movement, which is a long accompanied recitative for the trombones, is extremely impressive. 'Harold in Italy,' founded upon Byron's 'Childe Harold,' was planned during Berlioz's residence in Italy, and executed under the stimulus of Paganini. Here again we have the 'fixed idea,' in the shape of a lovely solo, representing the morose hero, given to the viola. The work was first planned as a viola concerto, but the composer's poetic instinct carried him into a dramatic symphony. First Harold is in the mountains and Byronic moods of longing creep over him. Then a band of pilgrims approaches and his melody mingles with their chant. Then the hero hears an Abruzzi mountaineer serenading his lady love, and to the tune of his 'fixed idea' he invites his own soul to muse of love. And, finally, Harold is captured by brigands, and his melody mingles with their wild dance.

Berlioz's melodies are apt to be dry and even cere-

LISZT'S DRAMATIC SYMPHONIES

bral in their character, but this one for Harold is as beautiful as one could wish:



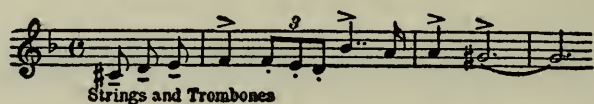
The 'Romeo and Juliet' is by many considered Berlioz's finest work. It is in two parts, the first including a number of choruses and recitatives narrating the course of the tragedy, and the second developing various pictures selected out of the action. The love scene is 'pure' music of the highest beauty, and the scherzo, based on the 'Queen Mab' speech, is one of Berlioz's most typical inventions.

All these compositions antedate by a number of years the works of Liszt and Wagner, which make extended use of Berlioz's means. Wagner describes at length how the idea of leit-motifs occurred to him during his composition of 'The Flying Dutchman' (completed in 1841), but he was certainly familiar with Berlioz's works. Liszt was from the first a great admirer of Berlioz, and greatly helped to extend his reputation through his masterly piano arrangements of the Frenchman's works. His development of the leit-motif in his symphonic poems is frankly an adaptation of the Berlioz idea.

Liszt's dramatic symphonies are two—'Dante' and 'Faust'—by which, doubtless, if he had his way, his name would chiefly be known among the nations. We have seen in an earlier chapter how deeply Liszt was impressed by the great paintings in Rome, and how in his youth he dreamed of some later Beethoven who would translate Dante into an immortal musical work. In the quiet of Weimar he set himself to accomplish the labor. The work is sub-titled 'Inferno, Purgatory, and Paradise,' but it is in two movements, the Purgatory leading into, or perhaps only to, the gate of

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

Heaven. The first movement opens with one of the finest of all Liszt's themes, designed to express Dante's



lines: 'Through me the entrance to the city of horror; through me the entrance into eternal pain; through me the entrance to the dwelling place of the damned.' And immediately another motive for the horns and trumpets to the famous words: 'All hope abandon, ye who enter here.' The movement, with an excessive use of the diminished seventh chord, depicts the sufferings of the damned. But presently the composer comes to a different sort of anguish, which challenges all his powers as tone poet. It is the famous episode of Paolo and Francesca da Rimini. It is introduced by another motive of great beauty, standing for the words: 'There is no greater anguish than, during suffering, to think of happier times.' In the Francesca episode Liszt lavishes all his best powers, and achieves some of his finest pages. The music now descends into the lower depths of the Inferno, and culminates in a thunderous restatement of the theme, 'All hope abandon,' by the horns, trumpets and trombones. The second movement, representing Purgatory, strikes a very different note, one of hope and aspiration, and culminates in the Latin *Magnificat*, sung by women's voices to a modal tune, which Liszt, now once more a loyal Catholic, writes from the heart.

The 'Faust' symphony, written between 1854 and 1857, is hardly less magnificent in its plan and execution. It is sub-titled 'three character-pictures,' and its movements are assigned respectively to Faust, Gretchen, and Mephistopheles. Yet the last movement merges into a dramatic narration of the love story and of Faust's philosophic aspirations, and reaches its climax in a men's chorus intoning the famous final chorus

THE SYMPHONIC POEM

from Goethe's drama: 'All things transitory are but a semblance.' The Faust theme deserves quoting because of its chromatic character, which has become so typical of modern music:



The whole work is in Liszt's most exalted vein. The 'character pictures' are suggestive in the extreme, and are contrasted in the most vivid manner. Liszt has rarely surpassed in sheer beauty the Gretchen episode, the theme of which later becomes the setting for Goethe's famous line, 'The eternal feminine leads us upward and on.' These two works—the 'Dante' and the 'Faust'—are doubtless not so supremely creative as Liszt imagined, but they remain among the noblest things in modern music. Their great difficulty of execution, even to orchestras in our day, stands in the way of their more frequent performance, but to those who hear them they prove unforgettable. In them, more than in any other of his works, Liszt has lavished his musical learning and invention, has put all that was best and noblest in himself.

V

The most typical musical form of to-day—the symphonic poem—is wholly the creation of Liszt. The dramatic symphony attained its highest development at the hands of its inventor; later works of the kind, such as Raff's 'Lenore Symphony,' have been musically of the second or third rate. It is quite true that a large proportion of the symphonies of to-day have some sort of general program or 'subject,' and nearly all are sufficiently dramatic in feeling to invite fanciful 'programs' on the part of their hearers. But few composers have cared or dared to go to Berlioz's lengths.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

The symphonic poem, on the other hand, has become the ambition of most of the able orchestral writers of our day. And, whereas Berlioz has never been equalled in his line, Liszt has often been surpassed, notably by Richard Strauss, in his.

Curiously enough, Berlioz, who was by temperament least fitted to work in the strict symphonic form, always kept to it in some degree. The most revolutionary of spirits never broke away wholly from the past. Liszt carried Berlioz's program ideas to their logical conclusion, inventing a type of composition in which the form depended wholly and solely on the subject matter. This latter statement will almost serve as a definition of the symphonic poem. It is any sort of orchestral composition which sets itself to tell a story or depict the emotional content of a story. Its form will be—what the story dictates, and no other. The distinction sometimes drawn between the symphonic poem and the tone poem is largely fanciful. One may say that the former tends to the narrative and the latter to the emotional, but for practical purposes the two terms may be held synonymous.

In any kind of musical narration it is usually necessary to represent the principal characters or ideas in particular fashion, and the leit-motif is the natural means to this end. And, though theoretically not indispensable, the leit-motif has become a distinguishing feature of the symphonic poem and inseparable from it. Sometimes the themes are many (Strauss has scores of them in his *Heldenleben*), but Liszt took a particular pleasure in economy of means. Sometimes a single theme served him for the development of the whole work. He took the delight of a short-story writer in making his work as compact and unified as possible. In fact, the formal theory of the symphonic poem would read much like Poe's well known theory of the short story. Let there be some predominant

character or idea—‘a single unique effect,’ in Poe’s language—and let this be developed through the various incidents of the narration, changing according to the changing conditions, but always retaining an obvious relation to the central idea. Or, in musical terms, select a single theme (or at most two or three) representing the central character or idea, and repeat and develop this in various forms and moods. This principle brought to a high efficiency a device which Berlioz used only tentatively—that of *transformation*. To Liszt a theme should always be fluid, rarely repeating itself exactly, for a story never repeats itself. And his musicianship and invention show themselves at their best (and sometimes at their worst) in his constant variation of his themes through many styles and forms.

But such formal statement as this is vague and meaningless without the practical application which Liszt gave it. The second and in many respects the noblest of Liszt’s symphonic poems is the ‘Tasso, Lament and Triumph,’ composed in 1849 to accompany a festival performance of Goethe’s play at Weimar on the hundredth anniversary of the poet’s birth. The subject caught hold of Liszt’s romantic imagination. He confesses, like the good romanticist that he is, that Byron’s treatment of the character appealed to him more than Goethe’s. ‘Nevertheless,’ he says in his preface to the work, ‘Byron, in his picture of Tasso in prison, was unable to add to the remembrance of his poignant grief, so nobly and eloquently uttered in his “Lament,” the thought of the “Triumph” that a tardy justice gave to the chivalrous author of “Jerusalem Delivered.” We have sought to mark this dual idea in the very title of our work, and we should be glad to have succeeded in pointing this great contrast—the genius who was misjudged during his life, surrounded, after death, with a halo that destroyed his enemies. Tasso loved and suffered at Ferrara; he was avenged at Rome; his

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

glory still lives in the folk-songs of Venice. These three elements are inseparable from his memory. To represent them in music, we first called up his august spirit as he still haunts the waters of Venice. Then we beheld his proud and melancholy figure as he passed through the festivals of Ferrara where he had produced his master-works. Finally, we followed him to Rome, the eternal city, that offered him the crown and glorified in him the martyr and the poet.' A few lines further Liszt says: 'For the sake, not merely of authority, but the distinction of historical truth, we put our idea into realistic form in taking for the theme of our musical hero the melody to which we have heard the gondoliers of Venice sing over the waters the lines of Tasso, and utter them three centuries after the poet.' The theme is one of the finest in the whole Liszt catalogue. We need hardly go to the length of saying that its origin was a fiction on the part of the composer, but doubtless he changed it generously to suit his musical needs. Yet his evident delight in its pretended origin is typical of the man and the time; romanticism had a sentimental veneration for 'the people,' especially the people of the Middle Ages, and a Venetian gondolier would naturally be the object of a shower of quite undeserved sentimental poetry. The whole story, and the atmosphere which surrounded it, was meat for Liszt's imagination.

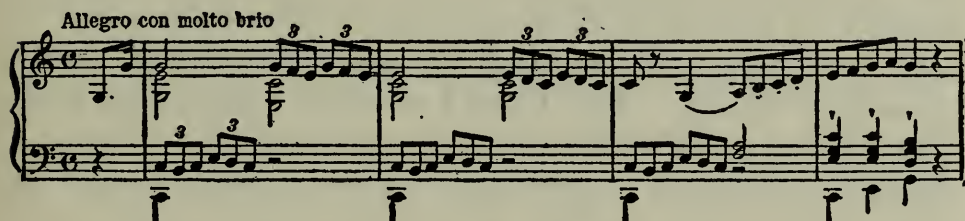


'TASSO, LAMENT AND TRIUMPH'

This is the theme—a typical one—which Liszt transforms, 'according to the changing conditions,' to delineate his hero's struggles, the heroic character of the man; his determination to achieve greatness; his 'proud and melancholy figure as he passed through the festivals at Ferrara'—the theme of the dance itself is developed from the Tasso motif:



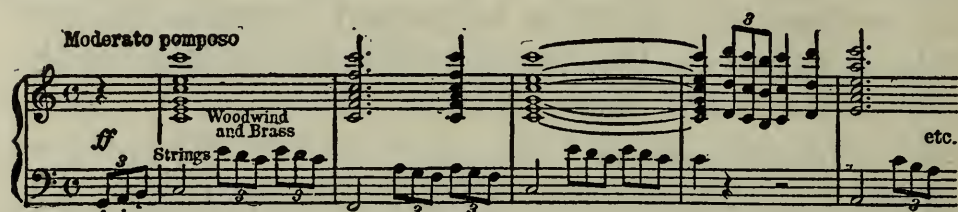
and then his boisterous acclamation by the crowd in Rome:



And here, for a moment, the listener hides his face. For Liszt has become as cheap as any bar-room fiddler. His theme will not stand this transformation. It happens again and again in Liszt, this forcing of a theme into a mold in which it sounds banal. No doubt the acclamations of the crowd *were* banal (if Liszt intended it that way), but this thought cannot compensate a listener who is having his ears pained. It is one of the regrettable things about Liszt, whose best is very nearly equal to the greatest in music, that he sometimes sails into a passage of banality without seeming to be at all conscious of it. Perhaps in this case he was conscious of it, but stuck to his plan for the sake of logical consistency. (The most frenzied radicals are sometimes the most rigid doctrinaires.) The matter is worth dwelling on for a moment, because it is one

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

of the most characteristic faults of the great man. In the present case we are compensated for this vulgar episode by the grand 'apotheosis' which closes the work:



Such is the method, and it is in principle the same as that since employed by all composers of 'symphonic poems'—of program music in fact.

Liszt's symphonic poems number twelve (excluding one, 'From the Cradle to the Grave' which was left unfinished at the time of his death). When they are at their best they are among the most inspiring things in modern music. But Liszt's strange absence of self-criticism mingles with these things passages which an inferior composer might have been suspicious of. In consequence many of his symphonic poems have completely dropped from our concert programs. Such ones as the 'Hamlet,' the *Festklänge*, and 'What is to Be Heard on the Mountain,' are hardly worth the efforts of any orchestra. *Les Préludes*, on the other hand, remains one of the most popular of our concert pieces. Nowhere are themes more entrancing than in this work, or his structural form more convincing. 'The Ideal,' after Schiller's poems, was one of Wagner's favorites among the twelve, but is uneven in quality. 'Orpheus,' which is less 'programmistic' than any of the others, in that it attempts only an idealized picture of the mythical musician, is worked out on a consistently high plane of musicianship. 'Mazeppa,' narrating the ride of Byron's hero tied on the back of a wild horse, is simply an elaboration and orchestral scoring of one of the piano études published as Liszt's

LISZT'S OTHER SYMPHONIC POEMS

opus 1 in 1826. The étude was even entitled 'Mazeppa,' and was descriptive of the wild ride, so we may, if we choose, give Liszt the credit of having schemed the symphonic poem form in germ before he became acquainted with the works of Berlioz. 'Hungaria,' a heroic fantasy on Hungarian tunes, should have been, one would think, one of the best of Liszt's works, but in point of fact it sounds strangely empty, and exhibits to an irritating degree the composer's way of playing to the gallery. The *Festklänge* was written, tradition says, to celebrate his expected marriage with the Princess von Wittgenstein, and, in view of Hunecker's remark that Liszt accepted the Pope's veto to this project 'with his tongue in his cheek,' we may assume that its emptiness was a true gauge of his feelings. In most of these works there is more than one chief theme, and sometimes a pronounced antithesis or contrast of two themes. In this classification falls 'The Preludes,' which, in attempting to trace man's struggles preparatory to 'that great symphony whose initial note is sounded by death,' makes use of two themes, each of rare beauty, to depict the heroic and the gentle sides of the hero's nature, respectively. The antithesis is more pronounced in 'The Battle of the Huns,' founded on Kalbeck's picture, which is meant to symbolize the struggle between Christianity (or the Church) and Paganism. The Huns have a wild minor theme in triplets, and the Church is represented by the Gregorian hymn, *Cruz Fidelis*.

Thus by works as well as by faith Liszt established the musical type which best expressed his fervent romantic nature. The symphonic poem form, coming to something like maturity at the hands of one man, was a proof of his intellectuality and his high musicianship. We may wish that he had written less and criticized his work more, but many of the pages are inescapable

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

in their beauty. In them we are in the very heart of nineteenth-century romanticism.

VI

Since the early days of violent opposition to Berlioz and Liszt the question of the 'legitimacy' of program music has not ceased to interest theorists. There are not a few writers to-day who stoutly maintain that the program and the pictorial image have no place in music; that music, being constructed out of wholly abstract stuff, must exist of and for itself. They wish to have music 'pure,' to keep it to its 'true function' or its 'legitimate place.' Music, they say, can never truly imitate or describe outward life, and debases itself if it makes the unsuccessful attempt.

Yet program music continues to be written in ever-increasing abundance, and, though from the practical point of view it needs no apologist, it boasts an increasing number who defend it on various grounds. These theorists point to the ancient and more or less honorable history of program music, extending back into the dark ages of the art. They mention the greatest names of classical music—Bach and Beethoven—as those of composers who have at least tried their hand at it. They show that the classic ideal of the 'purity of the arts' (by no means practised in classical Greece, by the way) has broken down in every domain, and that some of the greatest works have been produced in defiance of it. And, arguing more cogently, they point out that whether or not music *should* evoke visual images in people's minds, evoke them it does, and in a powerful degree. When *Tod und Verklärung* makes vivid to the imaginations of thousand the soul's agonies of death and ecstasies of spiritual resurrection, it is no better than yelping at the moon to moan that

THE 'LEGITIMACY' OF PROGRAM MUSIC

this music is not 'pure,' or is out of its 'proper function.'

Undoubtedly it is true that music which attempts to be accurately imitative or descriptive of physical objects or events is not worth the trouble. Certainly bad music cannot become good merely by having a program. But it is to be noted that all the great composers of program music insisted that their work should have a musical value apart from its program. Even Berlioz, as extreme as any in his program music, recorded the hope that his *Fantastique*, even if given without the program, would 'still offer sufficient musical interest in itself.' As music the *Fantastique* has lived; as descriptive music it has immensely added to its interest and vividness in the minds of audiences. And so with all writers of program music up to Strauss and even Schönberg, with his *Pelleas und Melisande* (though Schönberg is one of the most abstract of musicians in temperament).

Further, good program music throws its emphasis much more on the emotional than on the literal story to be told. Liszt rarely describes outward events. He is always depicting some emotion in his characters, or some sentimental impression in himself. And there are few, even among the most conservative of theorists, who will deny the power of music to suggest emotional states. If so, why is it not 'legitimate' to suggest the successive emotional states of a particular character, as, for instance, Tasso? The fact that a visual image may be present in the minds of the hearers does not alter the status of the music itself. If we admit this, then we can hardly deny that the composer has a right to evoke this image, by means of a 'program' at the beginning.

The fact is that not one listener in a hundred has any sense of true absolute music—the pure 'pattern music' which is as far from emotions and sentiments as

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

a conventional design is from a Whistler etching. Even the most rabid of purists, who exhaust a distinguished vocabulary of abuse in characterizing program music, may expend volumes of emotion in endeavoring to discover the 'meaning' of classical symphonies. They may build up elaborate significations for a Beethoven symphony which its composer left quite without a program, making each movement express some phase of the author's soul, or detecting the particular emotion which inspired this or that one. They will even build up a complete programmistic scheme for *every* symphony, ordaining that the first movement expresses struggle, the second meditation, the third happiness, and the last triumph—and more of the like. They will enact that a symphony is 'great' only in so far as it expresses the totality of emotional experience—of *specific* emotional experience, be it noted. This sort of 'interpretation' has been wished on any number of classical symphonies which were utterly innocent of any intent save the intent to charm the ear. And nearly always the deed has been done by professed enemies of program music.

But, in spite of the fact that the instinct for programs and meanings resides in nearly every breast, still there is a theoretical case for absolute music. There is nothing to prove that music, in and of itself, has any specific emotional implications whatsoever. It is merely an organization of tones. As such, since it sets our nerves tingling, it can indeed arouse emotion, but not *emotions*. That is, it can heighten and excite our nervous state, but what particular form that nervous state will take is determined by other factors. In psychological language, it increases our suggestibility. Under the nervous excitement produced by music a particular emotional suggestion will more readily make an impression, and this impression will become associated in our minds with the music itself.

THE 'LEGITIMACY' OF PROGRAM MUSIC

The program is such a suggestion. In a more precise way the words and actions of a music drama supply the suggestion. Of course, we have been so long and so constantly under the influence of musical suggestions that music without a particular suggestion may have a more or less specific import to us. Slow minor music we are wont to call 'sad,' and rapid major music 'gay.' But this is because such music has nearly always, in our experience, been associated with the sort of mood it is supposed to express. Somewhere, in the course of our musical education, there came the specific suggestion from outside.

But this discussion is purely theoretical. The practical fact is that music, thanks to a complex web of traditional suggestion, is capable of bringing to us more or less precise emotional meanings—or even pictorial meanings, for there is no dividing line. And this fact must be the starting point for any practical discussion of the 'legitimacy' of programme music. Starting with it, we find it difficult to exclude any sort of music on purely abstract grounds. Any individual may personally care more for 'abstract' music than for program music; that is his privilege. But it is a very different thing to try to ordain 'legitimacy' for others, and legislate a great mass of beautiful music out of artistic existence.

After all, the case reduces to this: that an ounce of practice is worth a ton of precept. And the successful practice of program music is one of the chief glories of the romantic movement. Whatever may have been the faults of the period, it demonstrated its faith by deed, and the present musical age is impregnated with this faith from top to bottom.

H. K. M.

CHAPTER X

ROMANTIC OPERA AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHORAL SONG

The rise of German opera; Weber and the romantic opera; Weber's followers—Berlioz as opera composer—The *drame lyrique* from Gounod to Bizet—*Opéra comique* in the romantic period; the *opéra bouffe*—Choral and sacred music of the romantic period.

I

IF vivid imagery was one of the chief lusts of the romantic school it would seem that opera should have proved one of its most typical and effective art forms. And, throughout the time, opera flourished in the theatres of Germany, and in Paris as a matter of course. Yet we cannot say that the artistic output was as excellent as we might expect. Of the works to be described in this chapter not more than eight are to-day thoroughly alive, and two of these are overestimated choral works. Yet in the most real sense the opera of the romantic period prepared the way for Wagner, who would no doubt be called a romanticist if he were not too great for any labels. And much of the music of the period, though it has been displaced by modern works (styles change more quickly in opera than in any other form) has a decided interest and value if we do not take too high an attitude toward it.

Modern opera can be dated from *Der Freischütz*. Yet it goes without saying (since nothing is quite new under the sun) that the work was not as novel in its day as it seems to us after the lapse of nearly a century. The elements of romanticism had existed in

THE RISE OF GERMAN OPERA

opera long before Weber's time. In Gluck's 'Armide' the voluptuous adventures of Rinaldo in the enchantress's garden had breathed the spirit of the German folk-lore awakening, though treated in Gluck's style of classical purity. Mozart, especially, must be counted among the romanticists of opera. The final scene of *Don Giovanni*, with its imaginative playing with the supernatural, to the accompaniment of most impressive music, seems to be a sketch in preparation for *Freischütz*. And the spirit of German song had already entered into opera in 'The Magic Flute,' which is in great part as truly German as Weber, except for its Italian grace and delicacy of treatment. Moreover, 'The Magic Flute' was a *singspiel*, or dramatic work with music interspersed with spoken text—the form in which *Der Freischütz* was written. Mozart's opera might have founded the German school, had conditions been different, but beyond the fact that the story is obscure and distinctly not national, the German national movement had not yet begun. We have seen in a previous chapter how it took repeated invasions and insults from Napoleon to arouse patriotism throughout the disjointed German lands, and how the patriotic spirit had to fight the repression of the courts at every turn. We have seen how it was hounded from the streets to the cellars and how from beneath ground it cried for some work of art which should symbolize and express its aspiration while it was in hiding. It was this conjunction of conditions which gave *Freischütz* such peculiar popularity at the time—a popularity, however, which was fully justified by its artistic value and could not have been achieved in such overwhelming degree without it.

The Italian opera, before Weber's time, had carried everything its own way. Those patriots who longed for the creation of a German operatic art had no sort of tradition to turn to except the *singspiel*. This was

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

never regarded highly, and was considered quite beneath the dignity of the aristocracy and of those who prided themselves on being artistically *comme il faut*. And it was frequently as cheap and thin (not to say coarse) as a second-rate vaudeville 'skit' to-day. But it had in it elements of good old German humor, together with occasional doses of German pathos, and cultivated a German type of song, such as then existed. At any rate, it was all there was. Weber had no turn for the Italian ways of doing things, and little knowledge of them. So when he sought to write serious German opera that should appeal to a great mass of the people—the desire for national popularity had already been stirred in him by the success of his *Leyer und Schwert* songs—he was obliged to write in a tongue that was understood by his fellow men. It is doubtful whether *Der Freischütz* could have gained its wide popularity had its few pages of spoken dialogue been replaced by musical recitative in the Italian style. Such is the influence of tradition.

But he had no need to be ashamed of the true German tradition to which he attached himself. The *singspiel*, which represented all there was of German opera, frequently cultivated a style of music which, if simple, was genuinely musical and highly refined. Reichardt's *singspiel*, *Erwin und Elmire*, to Goethe's text, has been mentioned in the chapter on Romantic Song, and its Mozart-like charm of melody referred to. The *singspiel* was a repository for German song, and frequently drew upon German folk-lore or 'house' lore for its subject matter. It needed only the right genius at the right time to raise it into a supreme art form.

As early as 1810, when Weber was still sowing his wild oats and flirting with a literary career, he had run across the story of the *Freischütz* in Apel's newly published book of German 'ghost-tales.' The subject

WEBER AND THE ROMANTIC OPERA

stirred his imagination and he planned to make an opera of it. But he found other things to turn his hand to, and was unable to hit upon a satisfactory librettist until in 1817 he met Friedrich Kind, who had already become popular with his play, *Das Nachtlager von Granada*. Kind took up with the idea, and in ten days completed his libretto. Weber worked at it slowly, but with great zest. Four years later, on the anniversary of the battle of Waterloo, it was performed for the first time, at the opening of the new Royal Theatre in Berlin. Its electric success, as it went through the length and breadth of Germany, has been described in a previous chapter.

Kind deserves a large share of the credit for the success of the work, though it must be confessed that he did not wear his laurels with much dignity. He protested rather childishly against the excision of two superfluous scenes from his libretto, and was forever trying to exaggerate his share in the artistic partnership. It seems to have been pique which prevented him from writing more librettos for Weber—and what a series of operas might have come out of that union! In 1843, long after Weber's death, he published a book, *Das Freischütz buch*, in which he aired his griefs. The volume would have little significance except for one or two remarkable statements in it. 'Every opera,' he says, 'must be a complete whole, not only from the musical, but also from the poetical point of view.' And again: 'I convinced myself that through the union of all arts, as poetry, music, action, painting, and dance, a great whole could be formed.' How striking these statements sound in view of the art theories which Wagner was evolving for himself five and ten years later! And it must be said, to Kind's justice, that he had worked consistently on this theory in the writing of the *Freischütz* libretto. He had insisted that Weber set his work as he had written it, and his

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

insistence seems to have been due to more than a petty pride.

The opera tells a story which had long been told, in one form or another, in German homes. Max, a young hunter, aspires to the position of chief huntsman on Prince Ottokar's domains. If he gains it he will have the hand of the retiring chief huntsman's daughter, Agathe, whom he loves. His success depends upon overcoming all rivals in a shooting contest. In the preliminary contest he has made a poor showing. In fear of failure he listens to the temptation of one Caspar, and sells his soul to the devil, Samiel, in return for six magic bullets, guaranteed by infernal charms to hit their mark. A seventh, in Max's possession, Samiel retains for his own use. The bullets are charmed and the price of the soul stipulated upon in dark Wolf's Glen at midnight. In this transaction Caspar acts as middleman in the affair in order to induce Samiel to extend the earthly life of his soul, which has similarly been sold. On the day of the shooting match Agathe experiences evil omens; instead of a bridal wreath a funeral wreath has been prepared for her. She decides to wear sacred roses instead. Max enters the contest and his six bullets hit the mark. Then, at the prince's commands, he shoots at a passing dove—with the seventh bullet. Agathe falls with a shriek, but she is protected by her sacred wreath and the bullet pierces Caspar's heart. Overcome with remorse Max confesses his sin. He is about to be banished in disgrace when a passing hermit pleads for him, urging his extreme temptation in extenuation, and he is restored by the prince to all his happiness, on condition that he pass successfully through a year's probation.

This story may stand as a type of the romantic opera plots of the time. Of first importance was its use of purely German materials—the national element which gave it its political significance. Only second in im-

WEBER AND THE ROMANTIC OPERA

portance was the fact that it was drawn from folklore and hence was material intelligible and interesting to everybody, as contrasted with the classic stories of the operas and plays of eighteenth century France, which were intelligible only to the upper class educated in the classics, and which was specifically intended to exclude the vulgar rabble from participation and so serve as a sort of test of gentility. Third was the incidental fact of the form which this democratic and national spirit took—an interest in the element of the bizarre, the fanciful, and the supernatural. It was wholly suited to the tastes of the romantic age that the devil Samiel should come upon the stage in person and charm the seven bullets before the gaping eyes of the audience.

The music shows Weber supreme in two important qualities, the folk sense and the dramatic sense. No one before him had been able to put into opera so well the very spirit of German folk-song, as he did in Agathe's famous moonlight scene, or in the impressive male chorus, accompanied by the brass, in the first act. In power of characterization Weber is second only to Mozart. The opening duet of the second act, sung by the dreamy Agathe and the sprightly Ännchen, gives to each character a melody which expresses her state of soul, yet the two combine with utmost grace. In his characterization of the supernatural Weber had no adequate prototype save the Mozart of the cemetery and supper scenes in *Don Giovanni*, for Spohr's operatic setting of the Faust legend was classic in tone and method. The verve of the music of Wolf's Glen is exhilarating to the imagination. Samiel, whose speeches are accompanied by rolls or taps on the kettle-drums, seems to live to our ears and eyes, and as the bullets, one after another, are charmed, the music rises until it bursts in a stormy fury. Many of the tunes of *Der Freischütz* have become folk-songs among the

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

German people, and the bridal chorus and Agathe's scene may be heard among the very children on their way home from school, while the vigorous huntsmen's chorus is a staple of German singing societies wherever the German language is spoken.

From the earliest years of his creative activity Weber had been composing operas. And they grew steadily better. The one just preceding *Freischütz* was *Abu Hassan*, a comic opera in one act telling the difficulties of Hassan and his wife Fatima to escape their debts. The dainty and bustling music has helped to keep the piece alive. But the piece which Weber intended should be his *magnum opus* was *Euryanthe*, which followed *Freischütz*. The critics, differing with the public in their opinion concerning the latter work, admitted Weber's power of writing in simple style, but asserted that he could not master longer concerted forms. Weber accepted the challenge and wrote *Euryanthe* as a work of pure romanticism, separated from the national element, conceived on the broadest musical scale. It is a true opera, without spoken dialogue. The music is in parts the finest Weber ever wrote, and in more than one way suggests *Lohengrin*, which seems to have germinated in Wagner's mind in part from the study of *Euryanthe*. Weber's last opera, written on commission from Covent Garden, London, and completed only a few months before his death, was 'Oberon,' a return to the singspiel type, with much of the other-worldly in its story. *Euryanthe* had failed of popular success, chiefly through its impossibly crude and involved libretto. 'Oberon' was better, but far from ideal. It has, like 'A Midsummer Night's Dream,' Oberon, Titania, Puck, and the host of fairies, together with mortal lovers whose destinies become involved with those of the elves. The music is often charming, revealing a delicacy of imagination not found in *Freischütz*, but it is lacking in characteriz-

WEBER'S FOLLOWERS

ing power, and reveals its composer's lessening bodily and mental vigor.

Weber had established German opera on a par with Italian, and there stood men ready to take up his mantle. Chief of these was Heinrich Marschner.* He is best known by his opera *Hans Heiling*, which tells the adventurer of the king of the elves who takes human form as the schoolmaster, Hans Heiling, in order to win a mortal maiden. The music is full of romantic imagination and is generally supposed to have influenced Wagner in the writing of 'The Flying Dutchman.' Marschner's other important operas are *Templer und Jüdin*, founded upon 'Ivanhoe,' and 'The Vampire.'

Conradin Kreutzer (1780-1849) was a prolific contemporary of Marschner's, but little of his music has remained to our time outside of *Das Nachtlager von Granada* and a few songs. The music of the opera is often thin, but now and then Kreutzer could catch the German folk-spirit as scarcely any others could save Weber. Lortzing (1801-1851) was a more gifted musician, and several of his operas are occasionally performed now. Chief of these is *Czar und Zimmermann*, which tells the adventures of Peter the Great of Russia working among his shipbuilders. In more farcical vein is *Der Wildschütz*. The music admirably suits the bustling comedy of peasant intrigue. E. T. A. Hoffmann, who so deeply influenced Schumann, was a talented composer, and a number of his operas, thoroughly in the romantic spirit, were popular at the time. Nicolai's † setting of Shakespeare's 'Merry Wives of

* Born, Zittau, Saxony, 1795; died, Hanover, 1861. Like Schumann, he went to Leipzig to study law but abandoned it for music. A patron took him to Vienna. He secured a tutorship in Pressburg and there wrote three operas, the last of which Weber performed in Dresden in 1820. There Marschner secured employment as musical director at the opera, but after Weber's death (1826) went to Leipzig as conductor at the theatre. From 1831 till 1859 he was court kapellmeister in Hanover.

† Otto Nicolai, born Königsberg, 1810; died, Berlin, 1849.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

Windsor,' dating from about this time, is a comic opera classic, and Friedrich von Flotow's 'Martha' is everywhere known. Its composer (1812-1883) wrote numerous operas, German and French, and at least one besides 'Martha' is still popular in Germany—'Stradella.' His music is, however, more French than German, though its rhythmic grace and piquancy, its easy, simple melody are universal in their appeal.

Two more important figures, musically considered, are Schumann, with his one opera, 'Genoveva,' and Peter Cornelius, with several works which deserve more frequent performance than they receive. Schumann had well-defined longings toward dramatic activity, but had the customary difficulties of discriminating musicians in finding a libretto. He hit upon an adaptation of Hebbel's *Genoveva*, a play drawn from a mediæval legend, rather diffuse and uneven in workmanship, but suffused with a noble poetic spirit that is only beginning to be appreciated. The play lacks the dramatic elements necessary for successful operas, and Schumann's music, though filled with beauties, is not fully successful in characterization, and hence tends to become monotonous. The overture, however, is a permanent part of our concert programs. We feel about Schumann as about Schubert (whose several operas, *Fierrabras*, *Alfonso und Estrella* and others, need be no more than mentioned), that they might have produced great dramatic works had they been permitted to live a little longer.

A man of ample musical stature and far too little reputation is Cornelius.* He was an actor and painter before turning to music. For some years he served Liszt as secretary and confidant at Weimar, working hard at music while acting as a sort of literary press agent for the more radical tendencies in music. He was one of the earliest to understand and believe in

* Born, Mainz, 1824; died there 1874.

BERLIOZ AS OPERA COMPOSER

Wagner's music and theories (see Chapter XI). As early as 1855 he was attempting to apply them to comic opera. The result was the two-act opera 'The Barber of Bagdad,' which Liszt thought highly of and brought to performance under his own direction at the Weimar Court Theatre. But the denizens of Weimar were by this time tired of the fad of being radical, and laughed the piece off the stage. It was in disgust at this fiasco that Liszt decided to give up his directorship in Weimar, and, after a few more months of gradually slipping away from his duties, he left the town for Italy, returning thereafter only for occasional visits. 'The Barber of Bagdad' (the libretto by Cornelius himself) carries out Wagner's theories concerning the close union of text and music, the dramatic and meaty character of the libretto, the fusion of recitative and cantilena style, and the use of the leit-motif. It is full-bodied music, excellent in technique and, moreover, filled with delightful musical humor and beautiful melodies. But it insists on treating its sparkling plot with high artistic seriousness, and this mystified the Weimar audience, who, no doubt, failed to see why one should take a comic opera so in earnest. Cornelius' later opera, 'The Cid,' was a serious work in the Wagnerian style and necessarily was overshadowed by Wagner's great works, then just becoming known. It is diffuse and uneven. But the last opera, *Gunlöd*, left unfinished at the composer's death and completed by friends, contains much to justify frequent revival.

II

The movement which we have just discussed had its parallel in France, though there the nationalistic element was lacking—conditions did not call for it; the fight had long since been fought (cf. Chapter I).

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

But in France, like in Germany, the romantic opera, the *drame lyrique*, was to grow out of the lighter type, the *opéra comique*, the French equivalent of the *singspiel*. Before discussing that development, however, we must consider for a moment the work of a composer who has already engaged our attention and who cannot be classed with any of his compatriots.

Hector Berlioz stood apart from the course of French opera. Fashionable people in his day applauded the pomposity of Meyerbeer and Halévy, the facility of Auber, but made short work of Berlioz's operas, when these were fortunate enough to reach performance. Berlioz might conceivably have adapted himself to the popular taste, but he was too sincere an artist and too impetuous an egotist. He continued to the end of his life writing the best he was capable of—and contracting debts. His operas were much in advance of his day, and are in many respects in advance of ours. They continue to be appreciated by connoisseurs, but the public has little use for the high seriousness of their music. A daring French impresario recently brought himself to a huge financial failure by attempting a series of excellent operas on the best possible scale, and in his list was *Benvenuto Cellini*, which had no small part in swinging the scale of fortune against him. The second part of *Les Troyens* was performed near the end of Berlioz's life, and was a flat failure; it did not even succeed in stirring up discussion; the public was simply indifferent. The first part of 'The Capture of Troy' did not reach the stage until Felix Mottl organized his Berlioz cycle at Carlsruhe in 1893. Doubtless the chief factor which led to the failure of these excellent works was their lack of balanced and readily intelligible melody. Berlioz's melodic writing was always a little dry, and one must be something of a gourmet to get beneath the surface to the rare beauty

BERLIOZ AS OPERA COMPOSER

within. But on the whole it is fair to say that the music fails of its effect simply because opera publics are too superficial and stupid. Yet it is possible to see signs of improvement in this respect, and we may hope for the day when Berlioz's operas will have some established place on the lyric stage.

'Beatrice and Benedict,' the libretto adapted by Berlioz from Shakespeare's 'Much Ado about Nothing,' is a work filled to the brim with romantic loveliness and animal life. It is one of that small class of comic operas (of which 'The Barber of Bagdad' is a distinguished member), which are of the finest musical quality throughout, yet thoroughly in accord with the gaiety of their subjects. The thrice lovely scene and duet which opens the opera has a pervading perfume of romanticism not often equalled in opera, and the rollicking chorus of drunken servants in the second act is that rarest of musical achievements, solid and scholarly counterpoint used to express boisterous humor. Shakespeare has rarely had the collaboration of a better poet-musician.

Benvenuto Cellini takes an episode in the artist's life and narrates it against the brilliant background of fashionable Rome in carnival time. The music is picturesque and the carnival scenes are brilliant and effective. But a far greater interest attaches to Berlioz's double opera 'The Trojans.' It was the work on which Berlioz lavished the affection and inspiration of his last years, the failure of which broke his heart. In it a remarkable change has come over the frenzied revolutionist of the thirties. It is a work of the utmost restraint, of the finest sense of form and proportion, of truly classical purity. Romain Rolland has pointed out the classical nature of Berlioz's personality, and the paradox is amply justified by this last opera. In Rolland's view Berlioz was a Mozart born out of his time. His sensitive soul, 'eternally in need

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

of loving or being loved,' was seared by the noise and bustle of the age, and reflected it in his music until disappointment and failure had forced him to withdraw into his own personality and write for himself and the muses. Berlioz's admiration for Gluck's theories, music, and artistic personality is vividly recorded in the earlier pages of the *Memoirs*. But in his student days there was no opportunity for such an influence to show itself. In his last years it came back—all Gluck's refinement, high artistic aim and classic self-control, but deepened by a wealth of technical mastery that Gluck knew nothing of. We are amazed, as we look over the choruses of 'The Trojans,' to see the utter simplicity of the writing, which is never for a moment routine or commonplace—the simplicity of high and rigid selection. The first division of the opera tells the story told in the *Iliad*, of the finding of the wooden horse, the entrance into Troy, the night sally, and the sack of the city. Cassandra, priestess of woe, warns her people, but is received with deaf ears. Over the work there hangs the tragic earnestness of the *Iliad*, which Berlioz loved and studied. In the second division the Trojans are at Carthage, and, instead of war we have the voluptuous lovemakings of Dido and Æneas, and the final tragedy of the Trojan queen, all told with such emotional intensity that the music is almost worthy to stand beside that of Wagner.

'The Damnation of Faust,' which follows the course of Goethe's play with special emphasis on the supernatural elements (freely interpolated), is best known as a concert work, being hardly fitted for the stage at all. It is picturesque in the highest degree. Berlioz's mastery of counterpoint and orchestration is here at its highest. The interpolated 'Rackozcy March' is universally known, and the 'Dance of the Sylphs' is one of the stock examples of Berlioz's use of the orchestra for eerie effects. The chorus of demons is sung, for the

BERLIOZ AS OPERA COMPOSER

sake of linguistic accuracy, to the words which Swedenborg gives as the authentic language of Hell.

Berlioz's music admits of no compromise. Either it must come to us or we must come to it. We have been trying ever since his death to patch up some kind of middle course.

H. K. M.

III

As we have seen in an earlier chapter, the *opéra comique* had developed after Boildieu into a new type, of which Auber, Hérold, Halévy, and Adam were the principal exponents. These were the men who prepared the way for the new lyric drama which grew out of the *opéra comique*—for the romantic opera of Gounod and Thomas. The romantic movement in French literature had, we may recall, received its impulse by Victor Hugo, whose *Hernani* appeared in 1829. Its influence on French music was most powerful from 1840 on. Composers of all schools yielded to it in one way or another, from Berlioz, who followed the ideals of Gluck, to Halévy, whose *Jaguarita l'Indienne* pictures romance in the tropics.

The direct result of this influence of literary romanticism was the creation of the *drame lyrique*. Yet it must not be thought that Thomas and Gounod deliberately created the *drame lyrique* as a distinct operatic form. Auber and others of his school had already produced operas which may justly lay claim to the titles of lyric dramas. And the earlier works of both Thomas and Gounod themselves were light in character. In fact, Thomas' *La double échelle* and *Le Perruquier de la Régence* are *opéras comique* of the accepted type; and *Le Caïd* has received the somewhat doubtful compliment of being considered 'a precursor of the Offenbach torrent of *opéra bouffe*.' In

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

Gounod's *Médecin malgré lui*, wherein he anticipated Richard Strauss and Wolf-Ferrari in choosing a Molière comedy for operatic treatment, the composer achieved a success. Yet this opera, as well as that charming modernization of a classic legend, *Philemon et Baucis*, both adhere strictly to the conventional lines of *opéra comique*.

Gounod's *Faust* remains the epochal work of his career. His *Sapho* (1851) never achieved popularity, but is of interest because it foreshadows his later style in its departure from tradition; in the final scene he 'struck a note of sensuous melancholy new to French opera.' Adam (in his capacity as a music critic) even claimed that in *Sapho* Gounod was trying to revive Gluck's system of musical declamation.

In March, 1859, the first performance of *Faust* took place at the Théâtre Lyrique in Paris. In a manner it represents the ideal combination of the brilliant fancy, dreamy mysticism, and picturesque description that is the stuff of which romanticism is made. Goethe's masterpiece, which had already been used operatically by Spohr, and, to mention a few among many, had also inspired Schumann, Berlioz, Liszt, and Wagner, achieved as great a success in the land of Goethe as it did in France. It was well received at its début by the critics of the day, but its success in Paris was gradual, notwithstanding the fact that the *Révue des Deux Mondes* spoke of 'the sustained distinction of style, the perfect good taste shown in every least detail of the long score, the color, supreme elegance and discreet sobriety of instrumentation which reveal the hand of a master.' But it must be remembered that at the time of its production Rossini and Meyerbeer were still regarded as the very incarnation of music.

Gounod's own style was essentially French, yet he had studied Mendelssohn and Schumann, and the

charm of the poetic sentimentality that permeated his music was novel in French composition. For several decades *Faust* remained the recognized type of modern French opera, of the *drame lyrique*, embodying the poesy of an entire generation. The dictum 'sensual but not sensual,' which applies in general to all Gounod's work, is especially appropriate to *Faust*. It shows at its best his lyric genius, his ability to produce powerful effects without effort, and that languorous seduction which has been deprecated as an enervating influence in French dramatic art. In spite of elements unsympathetic to the modern musician, *Faust*, taken as a whole, is a work of a high order of beauty, shaped by the hand of a master. 'Every page of the music tells of a striving after a lofty ideal.'

In *Faust* Gounod's work as a creator culminates. His remaining operas repeat, more or less, the ideas of his masterpiece. The four-act *Reine de Saba*, given in England under the name of 'Irene,' contains noble pages, but was unsuccessful. Neither did *Mireille* (1864), founded on a libretto by the Provençal poet Mistral, nor *Colombe*, a light two-act operetta, win popular favor. *Romeo et Juliette* (1867) ranks as his second-best opera. The composer himself enigmatically expressed his opinion of the relative values of the two operas in the words: '“Faust” is the oldest, but I was younger; “Romeo” is the youngest, but I was older.' *Romeo et Juliette* was an instant success in Paris, and was eventually transferred to the repertory of the Grand Opera, after having for some time formed part of that of the Opéra Comique. Gounod's last operas *Cinq Mars* and *Le Tribut de Zamora*, which is in the style of Meyerbeer, were alike unsuccessful.

Gounod struck a strong personal note, and he may well be considered the strongest artistic influence in French music up to the death of César Franck. His art is eclectic, a curious mixture of naïve and refined sin-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

cerity, of real and assumed tenderness, of voluptuousness and worldly mysticism, and profound religious sentiment. The influence of 'Faust' was at once apparent, and its new and fascinating idiom was soon taken up by other composers, who responded to its romantic appeal.

Among these was Charles-Louis-Ambroise Thomas (1811-1896), who had already produced five ambitious operas with varying success before the appearance of *Faust*. But *Mignon* (1866) is the opera in which after *Faust* the transition from the *opéra comique* to the romantic poetry of the lyric drama is most marked. Gounod's influence acted on Thomas like a charm. *Mignon* is an opera of great dramatic truth and beauty, one which according to Hanslick is 'the work of a sensitive and refined artist,' characterized by 'rare knowledge of stage effects, skill in orchestral treatment, and purity of style and sentiment.' Like Gounod, Thomas had chosen a subject by Goethe on which to write the opera which was to raise him among the foremost operatic composers of his day. Mme. Galti Marie, the creator of the title rôle, had modelled her conception of the part of the poor orphan girl upon the well-known picture by Ary Scheffer, and *Mignon* at once captivated the public, and remained one of the most popular operas of the second half of the nineteenth century.*

Again, like Gounod, Thomas turned to Shakespeare after having set Goethe. His 'Hamlet' (1868) was successful in Paris for a long time. And, though the music cannot match its subject, it contains some of the composer's best work. The vocal parts are richly ornamented; the poetically conceived part of Ophelia is a coloratura rôle, such as modern opera, with the possible exception of Delibes' *Lakmé*, has not produced, and the ballet music is brilliant. *Françoise de*

* In 1894 Thomas' *Mignon* was given for the thousandth time in Paris.

BERLIOZ AS OPERA COMPOSER

Rimini (1882) and the ballet *La Tempête* were his last and least popular dramatic works.

Léo Delibes (1836-1891), a pupil of Adam, is widely known by his charming ballets. The ballet, which had played so important a part in eighteenth century opera, was quite as popular in the nineteenth century. If *Vestris*, the god of dance, had passed with the passing of the Bourbon monarchy, there were Taglioni (who danced the Tyrolienne in *Guillaume Tell* and the *pas de fascination* in Meyerbeer's *Robert le Diable*), Fanny Elssler, and Carlotta Grisi, full of grace and gentility, to give lustre to the art of dancing. The ballet as an individual entertainment apart from opera was popular during the greater part of the nineteenth century, and was brought to a high perfection, best typified by the famous *Giselle*, written for Carlotta Grisi, on subject taken from Heinrich Heine, arranged by Théophile Gautier, and set to music by Adam. To this kind of composition Delibes contributed music of unusual charm and distinction. *La Source* shows a wealth of ravishing melody and made such an impression that the composer was asked to write a divertissement, the famous *Pas des Fleurs* to be introduced in the ballet *Le Corsaire*, by his old master Adam, for its revival in 1867. His 'Coppelia' ballet, written to accompany a pretty comedy of the same name, and the grand mythological ballet 'Sylvia' are considered his best and established his superiority as a composer of artistic dance music.

The music of Delibes' operas is unfailingly tender and graceful, and his scores remain charming specimens of the lyric style. *Le roi l'a dit* (1873) is a dainty little work upon an old French subject, 'as graceful and fragile as a piece of Sèvres porcelain. *Jean de Nivelle* has passed from the operatic repertory, but *Lakmé* is a work of exquisite charm, its music dreamy and sensuous as befits its oriental subject, and full of

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

local color. In *Lakmé* and the unfinished *Kassaya* * Delibes shows an awakening to the possibilities of oriental color. Ernest Reyer's (1823-1909) *Salammbô* is in the same direction; but it is Félicien David (1810-1876) who must be credited with first drawing attention to Eastern subjects as being admirably adapted to operatic treatment. He was a pupil of Cherubini, Reber † and Fétis, and he was for a time associated with the activity of the Saint-Simonian Socialists. Later he made a tour of the Orient from 1833 to 1835; then, returning to Paris with an imagination powerfully stimulated by his long stay in the East, he set himself to express the spirit of the Orient in music. The first performance of his symphonic ode *Le Désert* (1844) made him suddenly famous. It was followed by the operas *Christophe Colomb*, *Eden*, and *La Perle du Brésil*, which was brilliantly successful. Another great operatic triumph was the delightful *Lalla Roukh* which had a run of one hundred nights from May in less than a year (1862-1863). At a time when the works of Berlioz were still unappreciated by the majority of people, David succeeded in making the public take an interest in music of a picturesque and descriptive kind, and in this connection may be considered one of the pioneers of the French *drame lyrique*. *Le Désert* founded the school which counts not only *Lakmé* and *Salammbô* but also Massenet's *Le Roi de Lahore* and many others among its representatives.

No French composer responded more delightfully to the orientalism of David than Georges Bizet (1838-1875) in his earlier works. His *Pêcheurs de Perles* (1863) tells the loves of two Cingalese pearl fishers for the priestess Leila. It had but a short run, though its dreamy melodies are enchanting. Several of its forceful dramatic scenes foreshadow the power and

* Orchestrated by Massenet and produced in 1893.

† See Vol. XI.

BERLIOZ AS OPERA COMPOSER

variety of *Carmen*. His second opera *La jolie fille de Perth* (1867), a tuneful and effective work, was based upon one of Sir Walter Scott's novels; but in *Djamileh* (1872), his third opera, he returned to an Eastern subject. This was the most original effort he had thus far made, and it was thought so advanced at the time of its production, that accusations of Wagnerism—at that time anything but praise in Paris—were hurled at the composer. He was more fortunate in the incidental music he wrote for Alphonse Daudet's drama *L'Arlésienne*, which is still a favorite in the concert hall.

It has been said that the quality of Bizet's operatic work, like that of Gluck, depended in a measure on the value of his book. He was indeed fortunate in the libretto of *Carmen*, adapted from Prosper Mérimée's celebrated study of Spanish gypsy character, by Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy, the best librettists of their day. The dramatic element in the story as written was hidden by much descriptive analysis, but by discarding this the authors produced one of the most famous libretti in the whole range of opera. *Carmen* was brought out at the Opéra Comique in 1875. Bizet's occasional use of the Wagnerian leading motive was perhaps responsible for some of the coldness with which the work was originally received. Its passionate force was dubbed brutality, though we now know that it is a most fine artistic feeling which makes the score of *Carmen* what it is. *Carmen* was to Bizet what *Der Freischütz* was to Weber. It represents the absolute harmony of the composer with his work. In modern opera of real artistic importance it is the perfect model of the lyric song-play type, and as such it has exercised a great influence on dramatic music. It is in every way a masterpiece. The libretto is admirably concise and well balanced, the music full of a lasting vitality, the orchestration brilliant. Unhappily, only three months after its production in Paris the genial composer died

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

suddenly of heart trouble. His early death—he was no more than thirty-seven—robbed the French school of one of its brightest ornaments, one who had infused in the *drame lyrique* of Gounod and Thomas the vivifying breath of dramatic truth. The later development of French operatic romanticism in Massenet and others, as well as Saint-Saëns' revival of the classic model, are more fitly reserved for future consideration. Our present object has been to describe the development of the *drame lyrique* out of the older comic opera, and in a manner this culminates in *Carmen*.

IV

We have still to give an account of the development of the *opéra comique* in another direction—that of farcical comedy, a task which falls well within the chronological limits of this chapter. One reason for the gradual approximation of the *opéra comique* to the *drame lyrique* and grand opera, quite aside from the influence of romanticism, lay in the appearance of the *opéra bouffe*, representing parody, not sentiment. For if the *opéra comique* and *drame lyrique* of the first three quarters of the nineteenth century represented the advance of artistic taste and the preference of the musically educated for the essentially romantic rather than the merely entertaining; the *opéra bouffe* or farcical operetta, a small and trivial form, was the delight of the musical groundlings of the second empire, at a time when the pursuit of pleasure and the satisfaction of material wants were the great preoccupations of society, Jacques Offenbach (1819-1880) was in a sense the creator of this Parisian novelty. Though Offenbach was born of German-Jewish parents in Cologne, the greater part of his life was spent in Paris, and his music was more typically French than that of any of

OPÉRA COMIQUE IN THE ROMANTIC PERIOD

his French rivals. The tone of French society during the period of the Second Empire was set by the court. The court organized innumerable entertainments, banquets, reviews, and gorgeous official ceremonies which succeeded one another without interruption. Music hall songs and *opéras bouffes*, races and public festivals, evening restaurants and the amusements they provided, made the fame of this new Paris. And the music of the music halls and *opéras bouffes* was the music of Offenbach, the offspring of 'an eccentric, rather short-kilted and disheveled Muse,' who later assumed a soberer garb in the hands of Lecocq, Audran, and Hervé.

In conjunction with Offenbach the librettists Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy were the authors of these *operettes* and *farces* which made the prosperity of the minor Parisian theatres of the period. The libretto of the *opéra bouffe* was usually one of intrigue, witty, if coarse, and into the texture of which the representation of contemporary whims and social oddities was cleverly interwoven. Although the *opéras bouffes* were broad and lively libels of the society of the time, 'they savored strongly of the vices and the follies they were supposed to satirize.' Offenbach was peculiarly happy in developing in musical burlesque the extravagant character of his situations. His melodic vein, though often trivial and vulgar, was facile and spontaneous, and he was master of an ironical musical humor.* The theatre which he opened as the 'Bouffes Parisiens' in 1855 was crowded night after night by those who came to hear his brilliant, humorous trifles. *La grande duchesse de Gerolstein*, in which the triumph of the Bouffes Parisiens culminated, is perhaps the most popular burlesque operetta ever written, and it marked

* His best works are: *Orphée aux Enfers* (1858), *La belle Hélène* (1864), *Barbe-Bleue* and *La vie parisienne* (1866), *La grande duchesse de Gerolstein* (1867), *La Périchole* (1868), and *Madame Favart* (1879).

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

the acceptance of *opéra bouffe* as a new form worth cultivating. Offenbach's works were given all over Europe, were imitated by Lecocq, Audran, Planquette, and others; and, being gay, tuneful, and exhilarating, were not hindered in becoming popular by their want of refinement. But after 1870 the vogue of parody largely declined, and, though Offenbach composed industriously till the time of his death and though his *opéras bouffes* are still given here and there at intervals, the form he created has practically passed away. As a species akin in verbal texture to the *comédie grivoise* of Collet, adapted to the idiom of a later generation, and as a return of the *opéra comique* to the burlesque and extravagance of the old vaudeville, the *opéra bouffe* has a genuine historic interest.

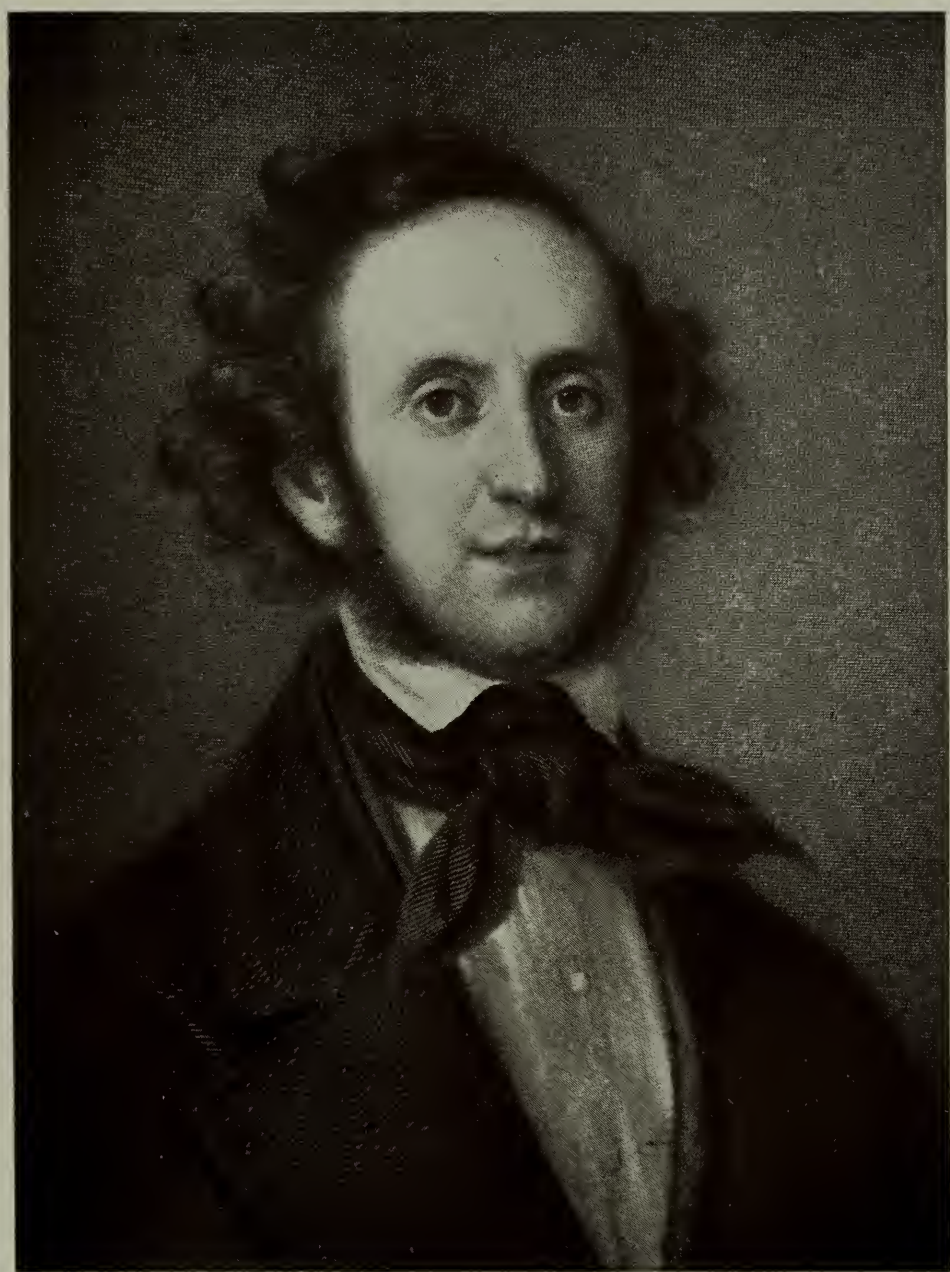
But it must not be forgotten that Offenbach created at least one work which is still a favorite number of the modern grand opera repertory. This is *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, a fantastic opera in three acts. It appeared after his death. It is genuine *opéra comique* of the romantic type, rich in pleasing grace of expression, in variety of melodic development, and grotesque fancy; and, though the music lacks depth, it is descriptive and imaginatively interesting, wonderfully charming and melodious, and has survived when the hundred or more *opéras bouffes* which Offenbach composed are practically forgotten.

F. H. M.

V

Having described the trend of operatic development in various directions, there remains only one class of composition which, though partially allied to it in form, is usually so different in spirit as to appear at first sight antagonistic—namely, choral song. Choral song has had, especially in recent times, a distinct development

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy



CHORAL AND SACRED MUSIC

independent of the church, and in this broader field it has assumed a new importance. The Romantic influence made itself felt even in the church, though perhaps secondarily—for, like the Renaissance, it was a purely secular movement. For purposes of convenience, however, the secular and sacred works are here treated together.

Of the choral church music of the German romantic period only two works are frequently heard in these days—the 'Elijah' and 'St. Paul' of Mendelssohn. The church had largely lost its hold over great composers, and when it did succeed in attracting them it did so spasmodically and by the romantic stimulus of its ritual rather than by direct patronage. And the spirit of the time was not favorable to the oratorio form. Mendelssohn's great success in this field is due to his rare power of revivifying classical procedure with romantic coloring. And his success was far greater in pious and unoperatic England than in his native land. The oratorio form did exercise some attraction for composers of the period, but their activity took rather a secular form. Schumann, who composed scarcely any music for the church, worked hard at secular choral music.

Schubert, as a remnant of the classic age, wrote masses as a matter of course. They are beautiful yet, and their lovely melodies rank beside those of Mozart's, though far below Mozart in mastery of the polyphonic manner. Schubert's cantata, 'Miriam's Song of Victory,' written toward the end of his life, is a charming work for chorus and soprano solo, full of color and energy, conquering by its triumphantly expressive melody.

In Byron's 'Manfred' Schumann found a work which took his fancy, in the morbid years of the decline of his mental powers. Byron's hero fell in love with his beautiful sister and locked himself up in a lonely

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

castle and communed with demons in his effort to live down his incestuous affection. The soul of the man is shown in the well known overture, and many of the emotional scenes have a tremendous power. Perhaps best of all are the delicate choruses of the spirits. The great vitality and beauty of the music make one wish that this work could have been a music drama instead of disjointed scenes for concert use. In 'Paradise and the Peri' Schumann found a subject dear to his heart, but his creative power was failing and the musical result is uneven. In the scenes from Goethe's 'Faust,' especially in the mystical third part, he rose higher, occasionally approaching his best level. The spirit of these works, so intense, so genuine, so broad in conception, so much more profound than that of his early piano pieces and songs, make us want to protest against the fate that robbed him of his mental balance, and robbed the world of what might have been a 'third period' analogous to Beethoven's.

Mendelssohn was canny enough (whether consciously or not) to use the thunder of romanticism in a modified form for his own profit. The intensity of the romanticists had in his time achieved a little success with the general public—to the extent of a love for flowing, sensuous melody and a taste for pictorial music. This, and no more, Mendelssohn adopted in his music. Hence he was the 'sane' romanticist of his time. We can say this without depreciating his sound musicianship, which was based on all that was greatest and best in German music. At times in the 'Elijah' one can imagine one's self in the atmosphere of Bach and Handel. But not for long. Mendelssohn was writing pseudo-dramatic music for the concert hall, and was tickling people's love for the theatrical while gratifying their weakness for respectable piety. At least this characterization will hold for England, which took Mendelssohn with a seriousness that seems quite ab-

CHORAL AND SACRED MUSIC

surd in our day. The 'Elijah,' in fact, can be acted on the stage as an opera, and has been so acted more than once. The wind and the rain which overtake the sacrifices to Baal are vividly pictured in the music and throughout the work the theatrical exploits of the holy man of God are made the most of. Yet the choruses in 'Elijah' often attain a high nobility, and the deep and sound musicianship, the mastery of counterpoint, and the sense of formal balance which the work shows compel our respect. 'St. Paul,' written several years earlier, is in all ways an inferior work. There is little in it of the high seriousness of Handel, and it could hardly hold the place it still holds except for the melodic grace of some of its arias. In all that makes oratorio dignified and compelling, Spohr's half-forgotten 'Last Judgment,' highly rated in its day, would have the preference.

The bulk of the sacred music of the romantic period must be sought for on the shelves of the musical libraries. Many a fine idea went into this music. But it has never succeeded in permanently finding a home in the church or in the concert hall. The Roman church, the finest institution ever organized for the using of musical genius, has steadily drawn away from the life of the world about it in the last century. The Italian revolution of 1871, which resulted in the loss of the Pope's temporal power, was a symbol of the separation that had been going on since the French Revolution. The church, drawing away from contact whenever it felt its principles to be at stake, lost the services of the distinguished men of art which it had had so absolutely at its disposal during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Liszt, pious Catholic throughout his later life, would have liked nothing better than to become the Palestrina of the nineteenth century church, but, though he had the personal friendship and admiration of the pope, his music was always too theatrical to be

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

quite acceptable to the ecclesiastical powers. Since the distinguished men of secular music have consistently failed to make permanent connections with the church in these later days, it is a pity that the quality of scholarly and excellent music which is written for it by the composers it retains in its service is not known to the outside world. For the church has a whole line of musicians of its own, but so far as the history of European music is concerned they might as well never have existed.

Berlioz's gigantic 'Requiem,' which is known to all music students, is rarely performed. The reason is obvious; its vast demands on orchestral and choral resources, described in the succeeding chapter, make its adequate performance almost a physical as well as a financial impossibility. The work is theatrical in the highest degree. Its four separated orchestras, its excessive use of the brass, its effort after vast masses of tone have no connection with a church service—nor were they meant to have. On the whole, Berlioz was more interested in his orchestra than in his music in this work. If reduced to the piano score the 'Requiem' would seem flat and uninspired music. At the same time, its apologists are right in claiming that outside of its orchestral and choral dress it is not itself and cannot be judged. Given as it was intended to be given, it is in the highest degree effective. Some of the church music which Berlioz wrote in his earlier years has little interest now except to the Berlioz student, but the oratorio 'The Childhood of Christ' (for which the composer wrote the text) is a fine work in his later chastened manner.

While Gounod is most usually known as a composer of opera, we must not forget that he wrote for the church throughout his life, and that, in the opinion of Saint-Saëns, his 'St. Cecilia Mass,' and the oratorios 'The Redemption' and *Mors et Vita* will survive all his

CHORAL AND SACRED MUSIC

operas. In all his sacred music Gounod has struck the happy medium between the popularity which easy melodious and inoffensive harmony secure and the solidity and strength due to a discreet following of the classic models.

Liszt wrote two pretentious choral works of uneven quality. The 'Christus' is obscured by the involved symbolism which the composer took very seriously. But its use of Gregorian and traditional motives is an idea worthy of Liszt, which becomes effective in establishing the tone of religious grandeur. The 'Legend of Saint Elizabeth' is purely secular, written to celebrate the dedication of the restored Wartburg, the castle where Martin Luther was housed for some months, and the scene of Wagner's opera 'Tannhäuser.' This work is chiefly interesting for its consistent and thorough use of the leit-motif principle. The chief theme is a hymn sung in the sixteenth century on the festival of St. Elizabeth—quite the best thing in the work. This appears in every possible guise and transformation, corresponding with the progress of the story. The scene which narrates the miracle of the roses is famous for its mystic atmosphere, but on the whole the 'legend' has far too much pomp and circumstance and far too little music.

In his masses Liszt touched the level of greatness. The Graner mass, written during the Weimar period, is ambitious in the extreme, using an orchestra of large proportions and a wealth of Lisztian technique. Here the imagination of the man becomes truly stirred by the grandeur of the church. But the most interesting of Liszt's religious works, from the point of view of the æsthetic theorist, is the 'Hungarian Coronation Mass,' written for performance in Buda-Pesth. Here Liszt, returning under triumphal auspices to his native land, tried an astonishing experiment. He used for his themes the dance rhythms and the national scales of

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

his people. In the *Kyrie* it is the *Lassan*—the dance which forms the first movement to nearly all the Rhapsodies. It is there, unmistakable, but ennobled and dignified without being distorted. The well known cadence, with its firm accent and its subsequent 'twist,' continues, with more and more emphasis to an impressive climax, then dies away in supplication. In the *Qui tollis* section of the *Gloria* Liszt uses a Hungarian scale, with its interval of the minor third, utterly removed from the spirit of the Gregorian mass. Again, in the *Benedictus*, the solo violin fiddles a tune with accents and grace notes in the spirit of the extemporization which Liszt heard so often among the gypsies in the fields. We are aghast at these experiments. They have met with disfavor; the church naturally will have none of such a tendency, and most hearers will pronounce it sacrilegious and go their way without listening.

So we may perhaps hear no more from Liszt's experiment of introducing folk elements into sacred music. But it was done in the music of this same Roman church in the fifteenth century. It was done in the Lutheran church in the sixteenth century. The attitude of the church in regard to this is an ecclesiastical matter. But it is impossible for an open-minded music lover to hear the Hungarian Mass and pronounce it sacrilegious.

H. K. M.

CHAPTER XI

WAGNER AND WAGNERISM

Periods of operatic reform; Wagner's early life and works—Paris: *Rienzi*, 'The Flying Dutchman'—Dresden: *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*; Wagner and Liszt; the revolution of 1848—*Tristan* and *Meistersinger*—Bayreuth; 'The Nibelungen Ring'—*Parsifal*—Wagner's musico-dramatic reforms; his harmonic revolution; the leit-motif system—The Wagnerian influence.

I

THE student or reader of musical history will perceive that it is impossible to determine with any exactitude the dividing lines which mark the epochs of art evolution. Here and there may be fixed a sharper line of demarcation, but for the most part there is such a merging of phases and confusion of simultaneous movements that we are forced, in making any survey or general view of musical history, to measure approximately these boundaries. It may be, however, noted that, as in all other forms of human progress, the decisive and revolutionary advances have been made by those prophetic geniuses who, in single-handed struggle, have achieved the triumphs which a succeeding generation proclaimed. It is the names of these men that mark the real milestones of musical history and on that which marks the stretch of musical road we now travel stands large the name of Richard Wagner.

That we may the more readily appreciate Wagner's place as the author of the 'Music of the Future' and the creator of the music drama, it is necessary to review briefly the course of musical history and particularly that of the opera as it led up to the time of Wagner's

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

birth at Leipzig, May 22, 1813. A glance at our chronological tables will show us that at the time Beethoven still lived and at the age of forty-three was creating those works so enigmatic to his contemporaries. Weber at the age of twenty-seven was, after the freedom of a gay youth, settling down to a serious career, seven years later to produce *Der Freischütz*. Mendelssohn, Schumann, Liszt, and Chopin were in their earliest infancy, while Schubert was but sixteen and Berlioz was ten. Thus may it be seen at a glance that Wagner's life falls exactly into that epoch which we designate as 'romantic,' and to this same school we may correctly assign the works of Wagner's earlier periods. But, as we of to-day view Wagner's works as a whole, it is at once apparent that the label of 'romanticist' is entirely inadequate as descriptive of his place in musical history. We shall trace in this chapter the growth of his art and follow its development in some detail, but for the moment it will suffice us if we recognize the fact that Wagner arrested the stream of romantic thought at the point where it was in danger of running muddy with sentimentality, and turning into it the clearer waters of classic ideals, opening a stream of nobler breadth and depth than that which had been the channel of romanticism.

Wagner's service to dramatic art was even larger, for the opera was certainly in greater danger of decay than absolute music. Twice had the opera been rescued from the degeneration that now again threatened it, and at the hands of Gluck and of Weber had been restored to artistic purity. Gluck, it will be remembered, after a period of imitation of the Italians, had grown discontent with the inadequacy of these forms and his genius had sought a more genuine dramatic utterance in returning to a chaster line of melody. He also adopted the recitative as it had been introduced into the earlier French operas, employed the

PERIODS OF OPERATIC REFORM

chorus in a truly dramatic way, and, spurning the hitherto meaningless accompaniment, he had placed in the orchestra much of dramatic significance, thereby creating a musical background which was in many ways the real precursor of all that we know to-day as dramatic music.

Weber we have seen as the fountain head of the romantic school, and his supreme achievements, the operas, we find to be the embodiment of all that romanticism implies; a tenderness and intense imaginativeness coupled with a tragic element in which the supernatural abounds. Musically his contributions to dramatic art were a greater advance than that of any predecessor; melodically and harmonically his innovations were amazingly original and in his instrumentation we hear the first flashes of modern color and 'realism' in music.

It was on these two dramatic ideals—the classic purity and strength of Gluck and the glowing and mystic romanticism of Weber—that Wagner's early genius fed. Wagner's childhood was one which was well calculated to develop his genius. With an actor as stepfather, brothers and sisters all following stage careers, an uncle who fostered in him the love of poetry and letters, the early years of Richard were passed in an atmosphere well suited to his spiritual development. While evincing no early precocity in music, we find him, even in his earliest boyhood, possessed with the creative instinct. This first sought expression in poetry and tragic drama written in his school days, but following some superficial instruction in music and the hearing of many concerts and operas, he launched forth into musical composition, and throughout his youthful student days he persisted in these efforts at musical expression—composing overtures, symphonies, and sonatas, all of which were marked with an extravagance which sprang from a total lack of technical

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

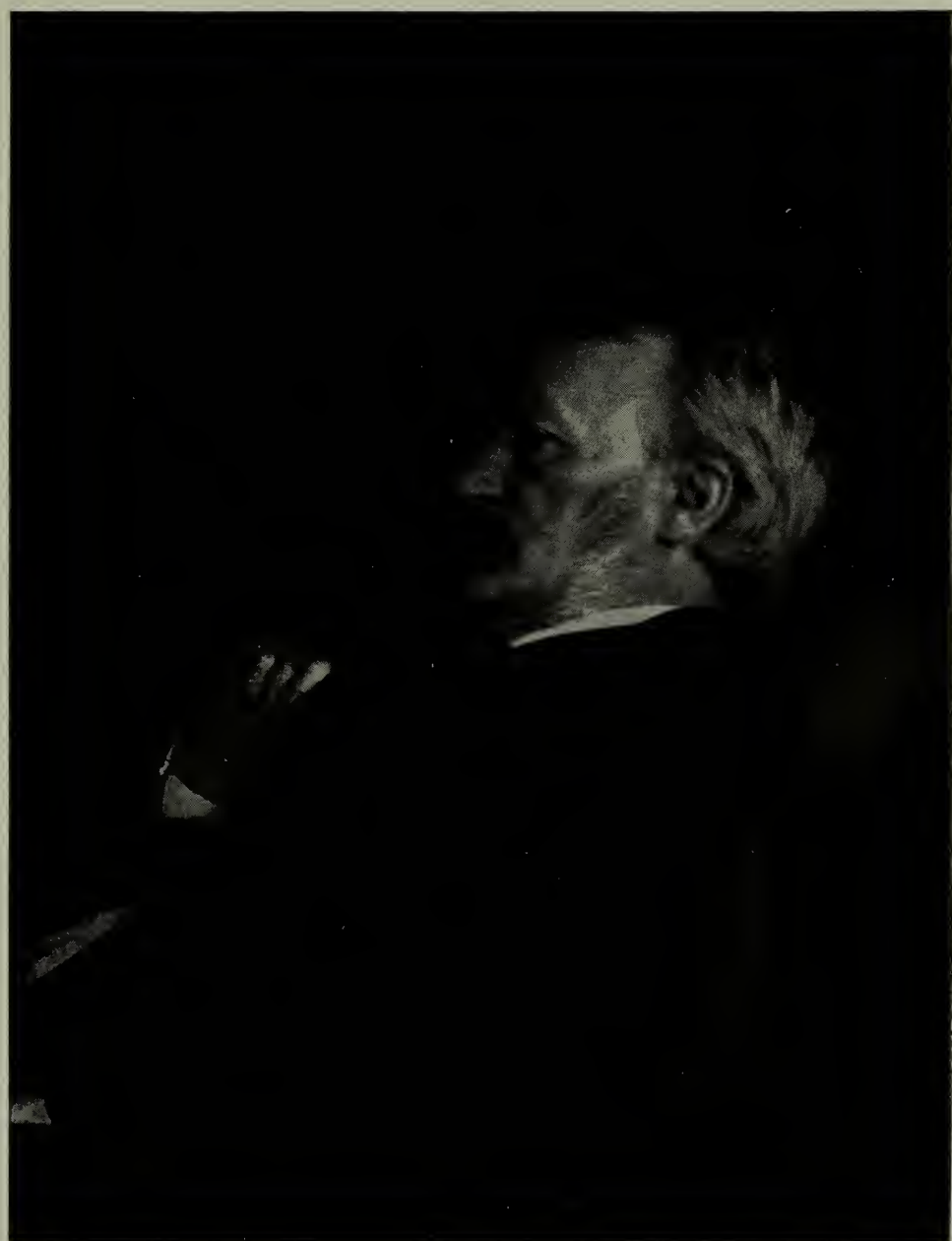
training. In the meantime, however, he was not disdaining the classic models, and he relates in his autobiography * his early enthusiasm for Weber's *Frei-schütz*, for the symphonies of Beethoven, and certain of Mozart's works. At the age of seventeen he succeeded in obtaining in Leipzig a performance of an orchestral overture and the disillusioning effect of this work must have had a sobering influence, for immediately after he began those studies which constituted his sole academic schooling. These consisted of several months' training in counterpoint and composition under Theodor Weinlich, at that time musical director of the Thomaskirche. After these studies he proceeded with somewhat surer hand to produce shorter works for orchestra and a futile attempt at the text and music of an opera called *Die Hochzeit*. In 1833, however, Wagner, at twenty-one, completed his first stage work, *Die Feen*, and in the next year, while occupying his first conductor's post at Magdeburg, he wrote a second opera, *Das Liebesverbot*. The first of these works did not obtain a hearing in Wagner's lifetime, while the second one had one performance which proved a 'fiasco' and terminated Wagner's career at Magdeburg. While these early works form an interesting historical document in showing the beginnings of Wagner's art, there is in them nothing of sufficient individuality that can give them importance in musical history. The greatest interest they possess for us is the evidence which they bear of Wagner's studies and models. Much of Weber, Mozart, and Beethoven, and—in the *Liebesverbot*, written at a time when routine opera conducting had somewhat lowered his ideal—much of Donizetti.

* 'My Life,' Vol. I.

Richard Wagner's last portrait

Enlarged from an instantaneous photograph (1883)

Enlarged from an instantaneous photograph (1883)
Richard Wagner's last portrait



WAGNER'S EARLY LIFE AND WORKS

II

The six years which followed were troublous ones for Wagner. In the winter of the following year (1837) he became conductor of the opera at Königsberg, and while there he married Minna Planer, a member of the Magdeburg opera company, whom he had met the previous year. After a few months' occupancy of this post he became conductor at Riga. Here a season of unsatisfactory artistic conditions and personal hardships determined him to capture musical Europe by a bold march upon Paris, then the centre of opera. In the summer of 1839, accompanied by his wife and dog, the journey to Paris was made, by way of London and Boulogne. At the latter place Wagner met Meyerbeer, who furnished him with letters of introduction which promised him hopes of success in the French capital. Again, however, Wagner was fated to disappointment and chagrin, and the two years which formed the time of his first sojourn in Paris were filled with the most bitter failures. It was, in fact, at this period that his material affairs reached their lowest point, and, to keep himself from starvation, Wagner was obliged to accept the drudgery of 'hack' literary writing and the transcribing of popular opera scores. The only relief from these miseries was the intercourse with a few faithful and enthusiastic friends * and the occasional opportunity to hear the superior concerts which the orchestra of the Conservatoire furnished at that time.

But the hardships of these times did not lessen Wagner's creative activities and from these years date his first important works: *Rienzi*, 'The Flying Dutchman,' and *Eine Faust Ouverture*.

* Kietz, the painter, E. G. Anders and Lehrs, philologists, were the most intimate of these friends.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

Wagner, during his stay at Riga, had become fully convinced that in writing operas of smaller calibre for the lesser theatres of Germany he was giving himself a futile task which stood much in the way of the realization of those reforms which had already begun to assume shape in his mind. He resolved to seek larger fields in writing a work on a grander scale. 'My great consolation now,' we read in his autobiography, 'was to prepare *Rienzi* with such utter disregard of the means which were available there for its production that my desire to produce it would force me out of the narrow confines of this puny theatrical circle to seek a fresh connection with one of the larger theatres.' Two acts of the opera had been written at Riga and the work was finished during his first months at Paris. Wagner sent the manuscript of the work back to Germany, where it created a friendly and favorable impression, and the prospects of an immediate hearing brought Wagner back to Germany in April, 1842. The work was produced in Dresden on the twentieth of the following October and was an immediate success.

It is *Rienzi* which marks the real beginning of Wagner's career as an operatic composer; the small and fragmentary works which preceded it serve only to record for us the experimental epoch of Wagner's writing. It is this place as first in the list of Wagner's work which gives *Rienzi* its greatest interest, for neither the text nor the music are such as to make it of artistic value when placed by the side of his later productions.

The libretto was written by Wagner himself after the novel by Bulwer Lytton. The hand of the reformer of the opera is not visible in this libretto, which was calculated, as Wagner himself frankly confessed, to afford opportunities for the brilliant and theatrical exhibition which constituted the popular opera of that time. While the lines attain to a certain dignity and loftiness

'RIENZI' AND 'THE FLYING DUTCHMAN'

of poetic conception, there is no trace of the attempt at the realization of those dramatic ideals which Wagner was soon to experience. Everything is calculated to musical effectiveness of a pronounced theatrical quality and the work presents the usual order of arias, duets, and ensemble of the Italian opera. The music for the greater part is matched to the spirit and form of the libretto. Here again theatrical effectiveness is the aim of Wagner, and to obtain it he has employed the methods of Meyerbeer and Auber. Not that the deeper and more noble influences are entirely forgotten, for there are moments of intensity when the worshipper of Beethoven and Weber discloses the depths of musical and dramatic feeling that were his. But of that style which Wagner so quickly developed, of that marvellously individual note which was destined to dominate the expression of future generations there is but a trace. A few slightly characteristic traits of melodic treatment, certain figurations in the accompaniment and an individual quality of chorus writing is all that is recognizable. The orchestration shows the faults of the other features of the work—exaggeration. It is noisy and theatrical, and, excepting in the purely orchestral sections, such as the marches and dances, it performs the function of the operatic orchestra of the day, that of a mere accompaniment.

'The Flying Dutchman' was written in Paris and the inspiration for the work was furnished by the stormy voyage which Wagner had made in his journey to London. The account which he himself has given of its composition gives an interesting idea of his methods of working and a touching picture of the conditions under which it was written. He says in the autobiography: 'I had already finished some of the words and music of the lyric parts and had had the libretto translated by Emile Deschamps, intending it for a trial performance, which, also, never took place. These parts

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

were the ballad of Senta, the song of the Norwegian sailors, and the "Spectre Song" of "The Flying Dutchman." Since that time I had been so violently torn away from the music that, when the piano arrived at my rustic retreat, I did not dare to touch it for a whole day. I was terribly afraid lest I should discover that my inspiration had left me—when suddenly I was seized with the idea that I had forgotten to write out the song of the helmsman in the first act, although, as a matter of fact, I could not remember having composed it at all, as I had in reality only just written the lyrics. I succeeded, and was pleased with the result. The same thing occurred with the "Spinning Song"; and when I had written out these two pieces, and on further reflection could not help admitting that they had really only taken shape in my mind at that moment, I was quite delirious with joy at the discovery. In seven weeks the whole of the music of "The Flying Dutchman," except the orchestration, was finished.'

While one is prompted to group 'Rienzi' and 'The Flying Dutchman' as forming Wagner's first period, in the latter work there is such an advance over the former in both spirit and style that we can hardly so classify them.

In 'The Flying Dutchman' we see Wagner making a decided break from the theatrical opera and turning to a subject that is more essentially dramatic. The mystic element which he here infuses and his manner of treatment are very decided steps toward that revolution of musical stage works which was to culminate in the 'music drama.' In its form the libretto presents less of a departure from the older style than in its subject and spiritual import; there is still the old operatic form of set aria and 'scene,' but so consistently does all hang upon the dramatic structure that the entire work is of convincing and moving force.

This same advance in spirit and dramatic earnest-

'RIENZI' AND 'THE FLYING DUTCHMAN'

ness rather than in actual methods is that which also distinguishes the score of 'The Flying Dutchman' from that of 'Rienzi.' The superficial brilliancy of the latter gives place in 'The Flying Dutchman' to a dramatic power which is entirely lacking in the earlier work. One important innovation in form must be remarked: the use of the 'leading motive,' which we find for the first time in 'The Flying Dutchman.' Wagner here begins to employ those characteristic phrases which so vividly characterize for us the figures and situation of the drama. In harmonic coloring the score shows but slight advance over 'Rienzi.' We can observe in the frequent use of the chromatic scale and the diminished seventh chord an inclination toward a richer harmonic scheme, but, taken in its entirety, the musical composition of the work belongs distinctly to what we may call Wagner's 'classic' period and is still far from being the 'music of the future.'

The success of 'Rienzi' brought to Wagner the appointment of court conductor to the king of Saxony, in which his principal duties consisted of conducting the opera at Dresden. Wagner occupied this position for seven years; he gained a practical experience of conducting in all its branches and a wide knowledge of a very varied musical *répertoire* which broadened his outlook and increased considerably his scope of expression. Besides the operatic performances, the direction of which he shared with Reissiger, Wagner organized for several seasons a series of symphony concerts at which he produced the classic symphonies, including a memorable performance of Beethoven's ninth symphony on Palm Sunday, 1846.* Wagner threw himself with great zeal into the preparation of this work, one of his first sources of inspiration.

* The pamphlet which Wagner wrote and caused to be circulated publicly in explanation of the symphony is found in Vol. VIII of his collected works (English edition).

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

The result was a performance which thoroughly roused the community, including the musical profession, which was well represented at the performance, to a sense of Wagner's greatness as an interpretative artist. There were many other events of importance in Wagner's external musical life at Dresden. Among these he tells us of the visits of Spontini and of Marschner to superintend the performances of their own works and of a festival planned to welcome the king of Saxony as he returned from England in August, 1844, on which occasion the march from *Tannhäuser* had its first performance by the forces of the opera company in the royal grounds at Pillnitz. In the winter of the same year we find Wagner actively interested in the movement which resulted in the removal of Weber's remains from London to their final resting place in his own Dresden. In the ceremony which took place when Weber's remains were finally committed to German soil, Wagner made a brief but eloquent address and conducted the music for the occasion, consisting of arrangements from Weber's works made by him. In the midst of a life thus busied Wagner found, however, time for study, and, in the summer months, for musical creation. His interest in the classic drama dates from this period and it is to his studies in mediæval lore pursued at this time that we may attribute his knowledge of the subjects which he later employed in his dramas.

Two musical works are the fruit of these Dresden years. *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*. These two works we suitably bracket as forming the second period of Wagner's creative work; and, while his advance was so persistent and so marked that each new score presents to us an advance in spirit and form, these two are so similar in spirit and form that they may be named together as the next step in the development of his style.

TANNHÄUSER AND LOHENGRIN

Tannhäuser and *Lohengrin* are designated by Wagner as romantic operas, a title exactly descriptive of their place as musical stage settings. While infusing into the spirit and action a more poetical conception, their creator had not as yet renounced the more conventional forms of the operatic text. The most important feature of the opera to which he still adhered was the employment, both scenically and musically, of the chorus. This, together with the interest of the 'ensemble' and a treatment of the solo parts more nearly approaching the lyric aria than the free recitative of the later dramas are points which these works share with the older 'opera.' The advance in the musical substance of these operas over the earlier works is very great. In *Tannhäuser* we find for the first time Wagner the innovator employing a melodic and harmonic scheme that bears his own stamp, the essence of what we know as 'Wagnerism.' From the first pages of *Tannhäuser* there greets us for the first time that rich sensuousness of melody and harmony which had its apotheosis in the surging mysteries of *Tristan und Isolde*. Wagner here first divined those new principles of chromatic harmony and of key relations which constituted the greatest advance that had been made by a genius since Monteverdi's bold innovations of over two centuries before.

In his treatment of the orchestra Wagner's advance was also great and revealed the new paths which an intimate study of Berlioz's scores had opened to him. In these two scores, and particularly in *Lohengrin*, we find the beginnings of the rich polyphonic style of *Tristan* and the *Meistersinger* and the marvellously expressive and original use of the wind instruments by which he attained, according to Richard Strauss, 'a summit of æsthetic perfection hitherto unreachd.'

With the advent of these two music dramas there commenced that bitter opposition and antagonism to

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

Wagner and his works from almost the entire musical fraternity and particularly from the professional critics, the records of which form one of the most amazing chapters of musical history. The gathering of these records and their presentation has been the pleasure of succeeding generations of critics who, in many cases, by their blindness to the advances of their own age, have but unconsciously become the objects for the similar ridicule of their followers. Great as may be our satisfaction in seeing history thus repeat itself, the real study of musical development is more concerned with those few appreciators who, with rare perceptive powers, saw the truth of this new gospel and by its power felt themselves drawn to the duty of spreading its influence.

Wagner once complained that musicians found in him only a poet with a mediocre talent for music, while the appreciators of his music were those outside of his own profession. This was in a large measure true and the explanation may be easily found in the fact that attention to the letter so absorbed the minds of his contemporaries that the spiritual significance of his art entirely escaped them in the consternation which they experienced in listening to a form of expression so radically new. It is interesting to note, in passing, the attitude toward Wagner's art held by some of his contemporaries. That of Mendelssohn as well as that of Schumann and Berlioz was at first one of almost contemptuous tolerance, which in time, as Wagner's fame increased and his art drew further away from their understanding, turned to animosity. It is somewhat strange to find in contrast to this feeling on the part of these 'romanticists' the sympathy for Wagner which was that of Louis Spohr, a classicist of an earlier generation. The noble old composer of *Jessonda* was a ready champion of Wagner, and in producing his operas studied them faithfully and enthusiastically

THE REVOLUTION OF 1848

until that which he at first had called 'a downright horrifying noise' assumed a natural form. But he who was to champion most valiantly the cause of Wagner, and to extend to him the helping hand of sympathy as well as material support, was Franz Liszt.

Wagner's acquaintance with Liszt dates from his first sojourn at Paris, but it was only after Wagner's return to Germany and the production of *Rienzi* that Liszt took any particular notice of the young and struggling composer. From that time on his zeal for Wagner's cause knew no bounds. He busied himself in attracting the attention of musicians and people of rank to the performances at Dresden, and made every effort to bring Wagner a recognition worthy of his achievement. In 1849 Liszt produced *Tannhäuser* at Weimar, where he was court conductor, and in August of the following year he gave the first performance of *Lohengrin*. During the many years of Wagner's exile from Germany it was Liszt who was faithful to his interests in his native land and helped to obtain performances of his works. The correspondence of Wagner and Liszt contains much valuable information and throws a strong light on the reciprocal influences in their works. And so throughout Wagner's entire life this devoted friend was continually fighting his battles, and extending to him his valuable aid, till, at the end, we see him sharing with Wagner at Bayreuth the consummation of that glorious life, finally to rest near him who had claimed so much of his life's devotion.

Wagner's term of office as court conductor at Dresden ended with the revolutionary disturbances of May, 1849. It is only since the publication of his autobiography that we have been able to gain any clear idea of Wagner's participation in those stormy scenes. While the forty pages which he devotes to the narration of these events give us a very vivid picture of his personal actions, and settles for us the heretofore much dis-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

cussed question as to whether or not Wagner bore arms, we can find no more adequate explanation of these actions than those which he could furnish himself when he describes his state of mind at that time as being one of 'dreamy unreality.' Wagner's independent mind and revolutionary tendencies naturally drew him into intimate relations with the radical element in Dresden circles: August Röckel, Bakunin and other leaders of the revolutionary party. It was this coupled with Wagner's growing feeling of discontent at the conditions of art life and his venturesome and combative spirit rather than any actual political sympathies which led him to take active part in the stormy scenes of the May revolutions. While his share in these seems to have been largely that of an agitator rather than of an actual bearer of arms, the accounts he gives of his part in the disturbance show us plainly that the revolution enlisted his entire sympathies. He made fiery speeches, published a call to arms in the *Volksblatt*, a paper he undertook to publish after the flight of its editor, Röckel, and was conspicuous in meetings of the radical leaders. With the fall of the provisional government Wagner found it necessary to join in their flight, and it was by the merest chance that he escaped arrest and gained in safety the shelter of Liszt's protection at Weimar. Wagner's share in these events resulted in his proscription and exile from Germany until 1861.

The following six years were again a period of wanderings. While maintaining a household at Zürich for the greater part of this time, his intervals of quiet settlement were few and he travelled restlessly to Paris, Vienna, and to Italy, besides continually making excursions in the mountains of Switzerland. While Wagner, during this period, enjoyed the companionship of a circle of interested and sympathetic friends, among whom were the Wesendoncks and Hans von Bülow, his severance from actual musical environment acted

THE REVOLUTION OF 1848

as a stay to the flow of his musical creative faculties. Aside from conducting a few local concerts in several Swiss cities, his life seems to have been quite empty of musical stimulus. But this lapse in musical productivity only furnished the opportunity for an otherwise diverted intellectual activity which greatly broadened Wagner's outlook and engendered in him those new principles of art that mark his entrance into a new phase of musical creation. At the beginning of his exile Wagner's impulse to expression found vent in several essays in which he expounds some of his new 'philosophy' of art. 'Art and Revolution' * was written shortly after his first arrival in Zurich and was followed by 'The Art Work of the Future,' * 'Opera and Drama,' † and 'Judaism in Music.' ‡ He also was continuously occupied with the poems of his Nibelungen cycle, which he completed in 1853.

In the same year Wagner began work on the musical composition of the first of the Nibelungen cycle, *Rheingold*, and at the same time he conceived the poem for *Tristan und Isolde*, the spirit of which he says was prompted by his study of Schopenhauer, whose writings most earnestly attracted him at that time. Composition on the Ring cycle meanwhile proceeded uninterruptedly, and 1854 saw the completion of the second opera, *Walküre*.

In 1855 he passed four months in London as conductor of the Philharmonic, an episode in his life which he recalls with seemingly little pleasure. In the following year (1856) he had completed the second act of *Siegfried*, when the impulse seized him to commence work on the music of *Tristan und Isolde*, the text of which he had originally planned in response to an order for an opera from the emperor of Brazil. During

* 'Prose Writings,' Vol. I.

† *Ibid.*, Vol. II.

‡ *Ibid.*, Vol. III.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

the next two years Wagner was feverishly immersed in the composition of this work. The first act was written in Zürich, the second act during a stay in Venice in the winter of 1858, and the summer of 1859 saw the work completed in Zürich.

While the earlier operas of the Ring, *Rheingold*, *Walküre*, and a part of *Siegfried*, were composed before *Tristan und Isolde*, it is the latter opera which definitely marks the next step in the development of Wagner's art. It is impossible to allot to any one period of Wagner's growth the entire Nibelungen cycle. The conception and composition of the great tetralogy covered such a space of time as to embrace several phases of his development. Between the composition of *Lohengrin* and that of *Rheingold*, however, stands the widest breach in the theories and practices of Wagner's art, for there does he break irrevocably with all that is common to the older operatic forms and adopts those methods by which he revolutionizes the operatic art in the creation of the music drama. In first putting these theories into practice we find, however, that Wagner passed again through an experimental stage where his spontaneous expression was somewhat under the bondage of conscious effort. The score of the *Rheingold*, while possessing the essential dramatic features of the other Ring operas and many pages of musical beauty and strength, is, it must be confessed, the least interesting of Wagner's works. It is only when we come to *Tristan und Isolde* that we find Wagner employing his new methods with a freedom of inspiration which precludes self-consciousness and through which he becomes completely the instrument of his inspiration.

'TRISTAN' AND 'DIE MEISTERSINGER'

III

The drama of 'Tristan and Isolde' Wagner drew from the Celtic legend with which he made acquaintance as he pursued his studies in the Nibelungen myths. As has been noted before, Wagner attributed the mood that inspired the conception of 'Tristan and Isolde' to his studies of Schopenhauer, and commentators have made much of this influence in attempting to read into portions of 'Tristan' and the other dramas a more or less complete presentation of Schopenhauer's philosophy. But Wagner's own writings have proved him to belong to that rather vague class of 'artist-philosophers' whose philosophy is more largely a matter of moods than of a dispassionate seeing of truths. The key to the situation is found in Wagner's own remark: 'I felt the longing to express myself in poetry. This must have been partly due to the serious mood created by Schopenhauer which was trying to find an ecstatic expression.' Wagner's studies had developed in him a new sense of the drama in which the unrealities of his early romanticism entirely disappeared. A classic simplicity of action, laying bare the intensity of the emotional sweep, and a pervading sense of fatalistic tragedy—this was the new aspiration of Wagner's art.

The score of 'Tristan and Isolde' is one of the highest peaks of musical achievement. It is a modern classic which in spirit and form is the prototype of almost all that has followed in modern dramatic music. Wagner has in this music drama developed his 'leit-motif' system more fully than heretofore and the entire score is one closely woven fabric of these eloquent phrases combined with such art that Bülow, who was the first to see the score, pronounced it a marvel of logic and lucidity. In his employment of chromatic harmony Wagner here surpassed all his previous mas-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

tery. A wealth of chromatic passing notes, suspensions and appoggiaturas gives to the harmony a richness of sensuous color all its own; while the orchestral scoring attains to that freedom of polyphonic beauty, to which alone, according to Richard Strauss, modern 'color' owes its existence.

Wagner, on the completion of *Tristan und Isolde*, began to long for its performance, a longing which he was compelled to bear for eight years. During these he experienced the repetition of his past sorrows and disappointments. Again he resumed his wanderings and for the next five years we find him in many places. In September, 1859, he settled in Paris, where he spent two entire seasons. After a series of concerts in which he gave fragments of his various works, Wagner, through the mediation of Princess Metternich, obtained the promise of a hearing of *Tannhäuser* at the Opéra. The first performance was given on March 13th after an interminable array of difficulties had been overcome. Wagner was forced to submit to many indignities and to provide his opera with a ballet in compliance with the regulations of the Opéra. At the second performance, given on the 18th of March, occurred the memorable and shameful interruption of the performance by the members of the Jockey Club, who, prompted by a foolish and vindictive chauvinism, hooted and whistled down the singers and orchestra. The ensuing disturbance fell little short of a riot.

It was during this last residence of Wagner in Paris that he was surrounded by the circle through which his doctrines and ideas were to be infused into the spirit of French art. This circle, constituting the brilliant *salon* meeting weekly at Wagner's house in the rue Newton, included Baudelaire, Champfleury, Tolstoi, Ollivier and Saint-Saëns among its regular attendants.

In 1861 Wagner, through the influence of his royal patrons in Paris, was able to return unmolested to

'TRISTAN' AND 'DIE MEISTERSINGER'

Germany. While the success of the earlier works was now assured and they had taken a permanent place in the répertoire of nearly every opera house, the way to a fulfillment of his present aim, the production of 'Tristan,' seemed as remote as ever. Vain hopes were held out by Karlsruhe and Vienna, but naught came of them and Wagner was again obliged to obtain such meagre and fragmentary hearings for his works as he could obtain through the medium of the concert stage. In 1863 he made concert tours to Russia and Hungary besides conducting programs of his works in Vienna and in several German cities. These performances, while they spread Wagner's fame, did little to assist him toward a more hopeful prospect of material welfare and thus in 1864 Wagner at the age of 51 found himself again fleeing from debts and forced to seek an asylum in the home of a friend, Dr. Wille at Mariafeld. But this season of hardship proved to be only the deepest darkness before the dawning of what was indeed a new day in Wagner's life. While spending a few days at Stuttgart in April of that year he received a message from the king of Bavaria, Ludwig II, announcing the intention of the youthful monarch to become the protector of Wagner and summoning him to Munich. Wagner, in the closing words of his autobiography, says, 'Thus the dangerous road along which Fate beckoned me to such great ends was not destined to be clear of troubles and anxieties of a kind unknown to me heretofore, but I was never again to feel the weight of the everyday hardship of existence under the protection of my exalted friend.'

Wagner, settled in Munich under the affectionate patronage of the king, found himself in a position which seemed to him the attainment of all his desires. He was to be absolutely free to create as his own will dictated, and, having completed his works, was to superintend their production under ideal conditions.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

During the first summer spent with the king at Lake Starnberg he wrote the *Huldigungsmarsch* and an essay entitled 'State and Religion,' and on his return to Munich in the autumn he summoned Bülow, Cornelius, and others of his lieutenants to assist him in preparing the performances of 'Tristan.' These were given in the following June and July with Bülow conducting and Ludwig Schnorr as Tristan. Many of Wagner's friends drew together at Munich for these performances and the event took on an aspect which forecasted the spirit of the Wagner festivals of a later day. Shortly after these first performances of 'Tristan' there arose in Munich a wave of popular suspicion against Wagner, which, fed by political and clerical intrigue, soon reached a point where the king was obliged to implore Wagner for his own safety's sake to leave Bavaria. Wagner again sought the refuge of his years of exile, and, thanks to the king's bountiful patronage, he was able to install himself comfortably in the house at Tribschen on the shores of Lake Lucerne, which was to be his home for the six years that were to elapse before he took up his final residence at Bayreuth. It was here that Wagner found again ample leisure to finish a work the conception of which dates from his early days at Dresden when he had found the material for the libretto in Gervinus' 'History of German Literature' and at the composition of which he had been occupied since 1861. This was his comic opera *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*.

While the musical material of *Die Meistersinger* is such as to place it easily in a class with 'Tristan' as a stage work, it offers certain unique features which place it in a class by itself. The work is usually designated as Wagner's only 'comic' opera, but the designation comic here implies the absence of the tragic more than an all-pervading spirit of humor. The comic element in this opera is contrasted with a strong

'TRISTAN' AND 'DIE MEISTERSINGER'

vein of romantic tenderness and the earnest beauty of its allegorical significance. In *Die Meistersinger* Wagner restores to the action some of the more popular features of the opera; the chorus and ensemble are again introduced with musical and pictorial effectiveness, but these externals of stage interest are made only incidental in a drama which is as admirably well-knit and as subtly conceived as are any of Wagner's later works, and it is with rare art that Wagner has combined these differing elements. The most convincing feature of the work as a drama lies in the marvellously conceived allegory and the satirical force with which it is drawn. So naturally do the story and scene lend themselves to this treatment that, with no disagreeable sense of self-obtrusion, Wagner here convincingly presents his plea for a true and natural art as opposed to that of a conventional pedantry. The shaft of good-humored derision that he thrusts against the critics is the most effective retort to their jibes, while the words of art philosophy which he puts into the mouth of Hans Sachs are indeed the best index he has furnished us of his artistic creed.

In the music, no less than in the libretto, of *Die Meistersinger* Wagner has successfully welded into a cohesive unit several diffusive elements. The glowing intensity of his 'Tristan' style is beautifully blended with a rich and varied fund of musical characterization, which includes imitations of the archaic, literally reproduced, as in the chorales, or parodied, as in Köthner's exposition of the mastersingers' musical requirements. The harmonic treatment is less persistently chromatic than that of 'Tristan' owing to the bolder diatonic nature of much of its thematic material, a difference which, however, cannot be said to lessen in any degree the wonderful glow of color which Wagner had first employed in *Tristan und Isolde*. Polyphonically considered, *Die Meistersinger* stands as the first work in which Wagner

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

brought to an ultimate point his system of theme and motive combinations. The two earlier operas of the Ring contained the experiments of this system and in 'Tristan' the polyphony is one more of extraneous ornamentation and variation of figure than of the thematic combination by which Wagner is enabled so marvelously to suggest simultaneous dramatic and psychological aspects.

Die Meistersinger had its first performance at Munich on June 21, 1868, and the excellence of this first performance was due to the zealous labors of those who at that time constituted Wagner's able body of helpers, Hans von Bülow, Hans Richter, and Karl Taubert. In the following year, at the instigation of the king, *Rheingold* and *Walküre* were produced at Munich, but failed to make an impression because of the inadequacy of their preparation.

Wagner in the meantime was living in quiet retirement at Tribschen working at the completion of the 'Nibelungen Ring.' From this date commences Wagner's friendship with Friedrich Nietzsche, a friendship which unfortunately turned to indifference on the part of Wagner, and to distrust and animosity on the part of Nietzsche.

On August 25, 1870, Wagner married Cosima von Bülow, in which union he found the happiness which had been denied to him through the long years of his unhappy first marriage. A son, Siegfried, was born in the following year, an event which Wagner celebrated by the composition of the 'Siegfried Idyl.'

IV

We now approach the apotheosis of Wagner's career, Bayreuth and the Festival Theatre, a fulfillment of a dream of many years. A glance through Wagner's cor-

BAYREUTH

respondence and writings shows us that the idea of a theatre where his own works could be especially and ideally presented was long cherished by him. This idea seemed near its realization when Wagner came under the protection of King Ludwig, but many more years passed before the composer attained this ambition. In 1871 he determined upon the establishment of such a theatre in Bayreuth. Several circumstances contributed to this choice of location; his love of the town and its situation, the generous offers of land made to him by the town officials and the determining fact of its being within the Bavarian kingdom, where it could fittingly claim the patronage of Wagner's royal protector. Plans for the building were made by Wagner's old friend, Semper, and then began the weary campaign for necessary funds. Public apathy and the animosity of the press, which, expressing itself anew at this last self-assertiveness of Wagner, delayed the good cause, but May 22, 1872, Wagner's fifty-ninth birthday, saw the laying of the cornerstone. Four more years elapsed before sufficient funds could be found to complete the theatre. Wagner in the meantime had taken up his residence at Bayreuth, where he had built a house, Villa Wahnfried. On August 13, 1876, the Festival Theatre was opened. The audience which attended this performance was indeed a flattering tribute to Wagner's genius, for, besides those good friends and artists who now gathered to be present at the triumph of their master, the German emperor, the king of Bavaria, the emperor of Brazil, and many other royal and noble personages were there as representatives of a world at last ready to pay homage to genius. The entire four operas of the 'Ring of the Nibelungen' were performed in the following week and the cycle was twice repeated in August of the same season.

As has been noted, the several dramas of the 'Ring'

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

belong to widely separated periods of his creative activity, and, musically considered, have independent points of regard. The poems, however, conceived as they were, beginning with *Götterdämmerung*, which originally bore the title of 'Siegfried's Death' and led up to by the three other poems of the cycle, are united in dramatic form and feeling. The adoption of the Nibelungen mythology, as a basis for a dramatic work, dated from about the time that *Lohengrin* was finished. Wagner, in searching material for a historical opera, 'Barbarossa,' lost interest in carrying out his original scheme upon discovering the resemblance of this subject to the Nibelungen and Siegfried mythology. He says: 'In direct connection with this I began to sketch a clear summary of the form which the old original Nibelungen myth had assumed in my mind in its immediate association with the mythological legend of the gods; a form which, though full of detail, was yet much condensed in its leading features. Thanks to this work, I was able to convert the chief part of the material itself into a musical drama. It was only by degrees, however, and after long hesitation, that I dared to enter more deeply into my plans for this work; for the thought of the practical realization of such a work on our stage literally appalled me.'

While the Ring poems constitute a drama colossal and imposing in its significance, far outreaching in conception anything that had been before created as a musical stage work, it is in many of its phases an experimental work toward the development of the ideal music drama which 'Tristan and Isolde' represents. Written at a time when Wagner was in the throes of a strong revolutionary upheaval and when his philosophy of art and life was seeking literary expression, we find the real dramatic essence of these poems somewhat obscured by the mass of metaphysical speculation which accompanies their development. In

THE 'NIBELUNGEN RING'

Siegfried alone has Wagner more closely approached his new ideal and created a work which, despite the interruption in its composition, is dramatically and musically the most coherent and most spontaneously poetic of the Ring dramas. It has been already noted that the break between the musical style of *Lohengrin* and that of *Rheingold* is even greater than that between the dramatic forms of the two works. In the six years which separated the composition of these two operas Wagner's exuberant spontaneity of expression became tempered with reflective inventiveness, and there pervades the entire score of *Rheingold* a classic solidity of feeling which by the side of the lyric suavity of *Lohengrin* is one of almost austere ruggedness. We find from the start Wagner's new sense of dramatic form well established and the metrical regularity of *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* is now replaced with the free dramatic recitative and 'leit-motif' development. Of harmonic color and polyphonic richness *Rheingold* has less interest than have the other parts of the cycle, and one cannot but feel that after the six years of non-productiveness Wagner's inventive powers had become somewhat enfeebled. With the opening scenes of *Walküre*, however, we find again a decided advance, a melodic line more graceful in its curve and the harmonic color enriched with chromatic subtleties again lends sensuous warmth to the style to which is added the classic solidity which *Rheingold* inaugurates. In polyphonic development *Walküre* marks the point where Wagner commences to employ that marvellously skillful and beautiful system of combining motives, which reached its full development in the richly woven fabric of *Tristan*, *Die Meistersinger*, and *Parsifal*.

Wagner has told us that his studies in musical lore were made, so to speak, backward, beginning with his contemporaries and working back through the classics. The influences, as they show themselves in his works,

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

would seem to bear out this statement, for, after the rugged strength of Beethoven's style which *Rheingold* suggests, the advancing polyphonic interest, which next appears in *Walküre*, reaches back to an older source for its inspiration, the polyphony of Johann Sebastian Bach. While, as has been remarked, *Siegfried* in its entirety forms a coherent whole, the treatment of the last act clearly displays the added mastery which Wagner had gained in the writing of *Tristan* and of *Die Meistersinger*. There is a larger sweep of melody and a harmonic freedom which belongs distinctly to Wagner's ultimate style. In *Götterdämmerung* we find the first manifestation of this latest phase of Wagner's art. A harmonic scheme that is at once bolder in its use of daring dissonances and subtler in its mysterious chromatic transitions gives added color to a fabric woven almost entirely of leit motifs in astounding variety of sequence and combination.

The inauguration of the Bayreuth Festival Theatre and the first performances there of the Nibelungen Ring certainly marked the moment of Wagner's greatest external triumph, but it was a victory which by no means brought him peace. A heavy debt was incurred by this first season's Bayreuth festival and it was six years later before the funds necessary to meet this deficit and to provide for a second season could be obtained. The second Bayreuth season was devoted entirely to the initial performances of *Parsifal*, with the composition of which Wagner had been occupied since 1877. The intervening six years had brought many adherents to the Wagner cause and financial aid to the support of the festival was more generously extended. After a series of sixteen performances it was found that the season had proved a monetary success and its repetition was planned for the following year, 1883. The history of the Festival Theatre since that date is so well known that its recitation here is unnecessary.

'PARSIFAL'

Bayreuth and the Wagner festival stand to-day a unique fact in the history of art. As a shrine visited not only by the confessed admirers and followers of Wagner, but by a large public as well, it represents the embodiment of Wagner's life and art, constituting a sacred temple of an art which, by virtue of its power, has forced the attention of the entire world. Bayreuth, moreover, preserving the traditions of the master himself, has served as an authentic training school to those hosts of artists whose duty it has become to carry these traditions to the various opera stages of the world.

Wagner was fated not to see the repetition of the *Parsifal* performances. In September, 1882, being in delicate health and feeling much the need of repose, he again journeyed to Italy. Settling in Venice, where he hired a part of the Palazzo Vendramin, he passed there the last seven months of his life in the seclusion of his family circle. On February 1, 1883, Wagner was seized with an attack of heart failure and died after a few moments' illness. Three days later the body was borne back to Bayreuth where, after funeral ceremonies, in which a mourning world paid a belated tribute to his genius, Richard Wagner was laid to his final rest in the garden of Villa Wahnfried.

V

The first conception of an opera on the theme and incidents of which *Parsifal* is the expression dates from an early period in Wagner's life. The figure of Christ had long presented to him a dramatic possibility, and it is from the fusion of the poetical import of his life and character with the philosophical ideas he had gleaned from his studies in Buddhism and Schopenhauer that Wagner evolved his last and most profound drama.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

It is the religious color and element in *Parsifal* that calls forth from Wagner the latest expression of his musical genius. We find in those portions of the *Parsifal* score devoted to the depiction of this element a serenity and sublimity of ethereal beauty hitherto unattained by him. As we listen to the diatonic progression of the 'Faith' and 'Grail' motives, we are aware that Wagner's genius continually sent its roots deeper into the soil of musical tradition and lore and that in seeking the truly profound and religious feeling he had sounded the depths of the art that was Palestrina's.

The *Parsifal* controversy has now become a matter of history. Wagner's idea and wish was to reserve the rights of performance of this work solely for the Bayreuth stage. This plan was undoubtedly the outcome of a sincere desire to have this last work always performed in an ideal manner and under such conditions as would not always accompany its production should it become the common property of the operatic world at large. This wish of Wagner was disrespected in 1904 by Heinrich Conried, then director of the Metropolitan Opera Company of New York, who announced a series of performances of *Parsifal* at that house during the season of 1903. The Wagner family made both legal and sentimental appeals in an attempt to prevent these performances, but they were unheeded and the work was first heard outside of Bayreuth on December 24, 1903. It must be said that the performance was a worthy one, as have been subsequent performances of this work on the same stage, and, apart from the sentimental regret that one must feel at this disregard of Wagner's will, the incident was not so deplorable as it was then deemed by the more bigoted Wagnerites. By the expiration of copyright, the work became released to the répertoire of European opera houses on January 1, 1914, and simultaneous performances in

WAGNER'S MUSICO-DRAMATIC REFORM

every part of Europe attested the eagerness with which the general public awaited this work.

With Wagner's musical works before us, the voluminous library of discussion and annotation which Wagner himself and writers on music have furnished us seems superfluous. Wagner's theories of art reform need little further explanation or support than those furnished by the operas themselves; it is in the earnest study of these that we learn truly to appreciate his 'philosophy' of art, it is in the universal imitation of these models that we find the best evidence of their dominating influence on modern art. The Wagnerian pervasion of almost all subsequent music forms the most important chapter of modern musical history, but before we turn to the consideration of this phenomenon let us briefly summarize the achievements of Wagner in this potent reform which Walter Niemann * says extends not only to music, the stage, and poetry, but to modern culture in its entirety; a sweeping statement, the proving of which would lead us into divers and interesting channels of thought and discussion, but which we must here renounce as not appertaining directly to the history of music in its limited sense.

Wagner's reformation of the opera as a stage drama, stated briefly, consisted in releasing it, as it had before been released by Gluck and by Weber, from the position which it had occupied, as a mere framework on which to build a musical structure, the words furnishing an excuse for the popularities of vocal music, the stage pictures and situations providing further entertainment. It was to this level that all opera bade fair to be brought at the time when Meyerbeer held Europe by the ears. We have in the foregoing sketch of the composer's life shown briefly how at first Wagner, still under the spell of romanticism, effected a compromise between the libretto of the older opera form

* *Die Musik seit Richard Wagner*, Berlin, 1914.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

and a text which should have intrinsic value as poetry and convincing dramatic force. Then after reflective study of classic ideals we find him making the decisive break with all the conventionalities and traditions of 'opera,' thus evolving the music drama in which music, poetry and stage setting should combine in one unified art. Situations in such a drama are no longer created to afford musical opportunities, but text and music are joined in a unity of dramatic utterance of hitherto unattained eloquence. Then as a final step in the perfection of this conception Wagner clarifies and simplifies the action while, by means of his inspired system of tonal annotation, he provides a musical background that depicts every shade of feeling and dramatic suggestion.

That system may be termed a parallel to the delineative method employed by Berlioz and Liszt in developing the dramatic symphony and the symphonic poem. Like them, Wagner employs the leit-motif, but with a far greater consistency, a more thorough-going logic. Every situation, every character or object, every element of nature, state of feeling or mental process is accompanied by a musical phrase appropriate and peculiar to it. Thus we have motifs of fate, misfortune, storm, breeze; of Tristan, of Isolde, of Beckmesser, of Wotan; of love and of enmity, of perplexity, deep thought, and a thousand different conceptions. The Rhine, the rainbow, the ring and the sword are as definitely described as the stride of the giants, the grovelling of Mime or the Walkyries' exuberance. So insistently is this done that the listener who has provided himself with a dictionary, as it were, of Wagner's phrases, can understand in minute detail the comments of the orchestra, which in a manner makes him the composer's confidant by laying bare the psychology of the drama. Such dictionaries or commentaries have been provided by annotators without num-

THE LEIT-MOTIF SYSTEM

ber, and in some measure by Wagner himself, and labels have been applied to every theme, melody, passage or phrase that is significantly reiterated. A certain correspondence exists between motifs used in different dramas for similar purposes, such as the heroic motif of Siegfried in B flat and the one for Parsifal in the same key. Wagner goes further—in his reference to the story of Tristan, which Hans Sachs makes in the *Meistersinger*, we hear softly insinuating itself into the musical texture the motifs of love and death from Tristan and Isolde, and so forth.

The efficacy of the system has been thoroughly proved and for a time it seemed to the Wagnerites the ultimate development of operatic language. Wagner himself indicated that he had but made a beginning, that others would take up and develop the system after him. It has been 'taken up' by many disciples but it has hardly been found capable of further development upon the lines laid down by the master. Our age rejects many of his devices as obvious and even childish. But in a larger sense the method has persisted. A new sense of form characterizes the musical substance of the modern, or post-Wagnerian, opera. The leit-motif, with its manifold reiterations, modifications, variations, and combinations, has given a more intense significance to the smallest unit of the musical structure; it has made possible the Wagnerian 'endless melody' with its continuously sustained interest, its lack of full cadences, and its consequent restless stimulation. That style of writing is one of the essentially new things that Wagner brought, and with it came the ultimate death of the conventional operatic divisions, the concert forms within the opera. The distinction between aria and recitative is now lost forever, by a *rapprochement* or fusion of their two methods, rather than the discontinuance of one. Wagner's recitative is an arioso, a free melody that has little in common with

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

the heightened declamation of a former age, yet is vastly more eloquent. It rises to the sweep of an aria, yet never descends to vocal display, and even in its most musical moments observes the spirit of dramatic utterance. It is a wholly new type of melody that has been created, which was not at first recognized as such, for the charge of 'no melody' has been the first and most persistent levelled at Wagner.

Great as was the manifestation of Wagner's dramatic genius, the fact must ever be recognized that his musical genius far overtopped it in its achievement and in its influence. It is as musical works that these dramas make their most profound impression. The growth of Wagner's musical powers far surpassed his development as poet or dramatist. If we take the poems of Wagner's works and make a chronologically arranged study of them, we shall see that, while there is the evolution in form and in significance that we have noted above, the advancing profundity of conception and emotional force may be largely attributed to the advance which the music makes in these respects. It may be argued that it was the progress of Wagner's dramatic genius that prompted and inspired the march of his musical forces, and, while this may be to some extent true, it is the matured musicianship of Wagner which removes *Götterdämmerung* far from *Rheingold* in its significance and not the difference in the inspiration of the two poems, which were written during the same period.

We have spoken of the immense influence of Wagner as a phenomenon. Surely such must be called the unprecedented obsession of the musical thought of the age which he effected. In rescuing the opera from its position as a mere entertainment and by restoring to its service the nobler utterances which absolute music had begun to monopolize, Wagner's service to the stage was incalculable. Opera in its older sense still exists

WAGNER'S HARMONIC REVOLUTION

and the apparition of a 'Carmen,' a *Cavalleria rusticana*, a truly dramatic Verdi, or the melodic popularities of a Massenet or Puccini attest the vitality and sincerity of expression which may be found outside of pure Wagnerism. It is, in fact, true that as we make a survey of the post-Wagner operas the actual adoption of his dramatic methods is not by any means universal, omnipresent as may be the influence of his reforms. The demand for sincerity of dramatic utterance is now everywhere strongly felt, but the music drama, as it came from the hand of Wagner, still remains the unique product of him alone whose genius was colossal enough to bring it to fruition.

More completely enthralling has been the spell of Wagner's musical influence, but before measuring its far-reaching circle let us consider for a moment Wagner's scores in the light of absolute music and remark upon some of their intrinsic musical content. Wagner's principal innovations were in the department of harmonic structure. Speaking broadly, the essence of this new harmonic treatment was a free use of the chromatic element, which, radical as it was, was directly due to the influence of Beethoven's latest style. This phase of Wagner's composition first asserted itself, as we have before noted, in *Tannhäuser* and found its highest expression in 'Tristan and Isolde.' The chromatic features of Wagner's melodic line are undoubtedly in a measure an outgrowth of this harmonic sense, though it would perhaps be truer to say that discoveries in either department reflected themselves in new-found effects in the other. Volumes would not suffice to enumerate even superficially the various formulæ which these chromaticisms assume, but a very general classification might divide them into two groups; the first consisting of passages of sinuous chromatic leadings in conjunct motion. One of the

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

earliest evidences of this idiom is found in *Tannhäuser*:



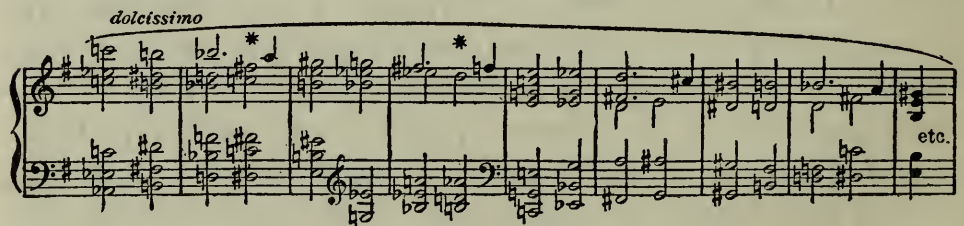
and the full development of its possibilities are exemplified in the sensuous weavings of 'Tristan':



The second type of harmonic formula is one in which remotely related triads follow each other in chromatic order with an enharmonic relationship. The following passage from *Lohengrin* is an early example of this type:



and its ultimate development may be seen in the following passage from the *Walküre*:



The latter passage contains (at *) another striking feature of Wagner's harmonic scheme, namely the strong and biting chromatic suspensions which fell on the ears of his generation with much the same effect

WAGNER'S HARMONIC REVOLUTION

as must have had those earlier suspensions on the age of Monteverdi. Wagner's scores are replete with the most varied and beautiful examples of these moments of harmonic strife. In these three features, together with an exceedingly varied use of the chord of the ninth, lie many of the principles upon which Wagner built his harmonic scheme, though it would be folly to assert that any such superficial survey could give an adequate conception of a system that was so varied in its idiom and so intricate in its processes. It must be added that, although, as we have stated, chromaticism was the salient feature of Wagner's harmony, his fine sense of balance and contrast prevented him from employing harmonies heavily scented to a point of stifling thickness; he interspersed them wisely with a strong vein of diatonic solidity, the materials of which he handled with the mastery of Beethoven. We have already cited the diatonic purity of certain of the *Par-sifal* motives and we need only remind the reader of the leading *Meistersinger* themes as a further proof of Wagner's solid sense of tonality.

In rhythmical structure Wagner's music possesses its most conventional feature. We find little of the skillful juggling of motive and phrase which was Beethoven's and which Brahms employed with such bewildering mastery. Wagner in his earliest work uses a particularly straightforward rhythmical formula; common time is most prevalent and the phrases are simple in their rhythmical structure, an occasional syncopation being the only deviation from a regular following of the beat and its equal divisions. The rhythmical development of his later style is also comparatively simple in its following; rhythmical excitement is largely in the restless figuration which the strings weave round the harmonic body. These figures are usually well defined groups of the regular beat divisions with an occasional syncopation and no disturb-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

ance of the regular pulse of the measure. An examination of the violin parts of 'Tristan' or the *Meistersinger* will reveal the gamut of Wagner's rhythmical sense. Summing up we may say that Wagner's methods, radical as they appear, are built on the solid foundation of his predecessors and, now that in our view of his art we are able to employ some sense of perspective, we may readily perceive it to assume naturally its place as a step after Beethoven and Schubert in harmonic development.

It is with hypnotic power that these methods and their effects have possessed the musical consciousness of the succeeding generation and, becoming the very essence of modernity, insinuated themselves into the pages of all modern music. The one other personality in modern German music that assumes any proportions beside the overshadowing figure of the Bayreuth master is Johannes Brahms. As it would seem necessary for the detractors of any cause or movement to find an opposing force that they may pit against the object of their disfavor, so did the anti-Wagnerites, headed by Hanslick,* gather round the unconcerned Brahms with their war-cries against Wagner. Much time and patience have been lost over the Brahms-Wagner controversy and surely to no end. So opposed are the ideals and methods of these two leaders of modern musical thought that comparisons become indeed stupidly odious. To the reflective classicist of intellectual proclivities Brahms will remain the model, while Wagner rests, on the other hand, the guide of those beguiled by sensuous color and dramatic freedom. That the two are not irreconcilable in the same mind may be seen in the fact that Richard Strauss showed a strong Brahms influence in his earlier works, and then, without total reincarnation, became

* Eduard Hanslick, celebrated critic, Brahms champion and anti-Wagnerite, b. Prague, 1825; d. Vienna, 1904.

THE WAGNERIAN INFLUENCE

a close follower of Wagner, whose style has formed the basis on which the most representative living German has built his imposing structures. It is, indeed, Richard Strauss who has shown us the further possibilities of the Wagner idiom. Though he has been guided by Liszt in certain externals of form and design, the polyphonic orchestral texture and harmonic richness of Strauss' later style, individual as they are, remain the distinct derivative of Richard Wagner's art. The failure of Strauss in his first opera, *Guntram*, may be attributed to the dangerous experiment of which we have spoken—that of a too servile emulation of Wagner's methods. In attempting to create his own libretto and in following too closely the lines of Wagner, he there became little more than a mere imitator, a charge which, however, cannot be brought against him as the composer of *Salomé* and *Rosenkavalier*.

In Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel* we find perhaps the next most prominent manifestation of the Wagnerian influence. Humperdinck met Wagner during the master's last years and was one of those who assisted at the first *Parsifal* performances. While his indebtedness to Wagner for harmonic, melodic, and orchestral treatment is great, Humperdinck has, by the employment of the naïve materials of folk-song, infused a strong and freshly individual spirit into this charming work, which by its fairy-tale subject became the prototype of a considerable following of fairy operas.

To complete the catalogue of German operatic composers who are followers of Wagner would be to make it inclusive of every name and work that has attained any place in the operatic répertoire of modern times.

In no less degree is his despotic hand felt in the realm of absolute music. It was through the concert stage that Wagner won much of his first recognition and it followed naturally that symphonic music must soon have felt the influence of his genius. Anton

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

Bruckner was an early convert and, as a confessed disciple, attempted to demonstrate in his symphonies how the dramatic warmth of Wagner's style could be confined within the symphony's restricting line; a step which opened up to those who did not follow Brahms and the classic romanticists a path which has since been well trodden.

Outside of Germany the spread of Wagner's works and the progress of his influence forms an interesting chapter in history. We have seen Wagner resident in Paris at several periods of his life; on the occasion of his first two French sojourns his acquaintance was largely with the older men, such as Berlioz, Halévy, Auber, and others, but during his final stay in Paris, in 1861, Wagner came into contact with some of the younger generation, Saint-Saëns and Gounod among others. It was perhaps natural in a France, which still looked to Germany for its musical education, that these two youthful and enthusiastic composers should champion the cause of Wagner and become imbued with his influence, an influence which showed itself strongly in their subsequent work. While neither of these men made any attempt at remodelling the operatic form after Wagner's ideas, their music soon showed his influence, though denied by them as it was on several occasions. More open in his discipleship of Wagner and a too close imitator of his methods was Ernest Reyer, whose *Sigurd* comes from the same source as Wagner's 'Ring'—the Nibelungen myths. Bizet is often unjustly accused of Wagnerian tendencies; though he was undoubtedly an earnest student and admirer of Wagner's works and has, in *Carmen*, made some slight use of a leading motive system, his music, in its strongly national flavor, has remained peculiarly free from Wagner's influence. Massenet, on the other hand, with his less vital style, has in several instances succumbed to Wagner's influence, and in *Esclarmonde* there occurs

THE WAGNERIAN INFLUENCE

a motive so like one of the *Meistersinger* motives that on the production of the work Massenet was called by a critic 'Mlle. Wagner.' Stronger still becomes the Wagner vein in French music as we come down to our own day. Charpentier's 'Louise,' despite its distinctive color and feeling, leans very heavily on Wagner in its harmonic and orchestral treatment. As a reactionary influence against this encroaching tide of Wagnerism was the quiet rise of the new nationalistic French school which César Franck was evolving through his sober post-Beethoven classicism. That Franck himself was an admirer of Wagner we learn from Vincent d'Indy,* who tells us that it was the habit of his master to place himself in the mood for composition by starting his working hours in playing with great enthusiasm the prelude of *Die Meistersinger*. César Franck numbered among his pupils a great many of those who to-day form the circle of representative French composers. These writers all show the forming hand of their master and faithfully follow in his efforts to preserve a noble, national art. There has, however, crept into many of their pages the haunting and unmistakable voice of the Bayreuth master. Vincent d'Indy, one of the early champions of Wagner and one who, with the two conductors, Lamoureux and Colonne, did much to win a place for Wagner's music in both opera house and concert room of Paris, is strongly Wagnerian in many of his moments and the failure of his dramatic work is generally attributed to his over-zealous following of Wagner. The strongest check to Wagnerism in France and elsewhere is the new France that asserts itself in the voice of him whom many claim to be the first original thinker in music since Wagner—Claude Debussy. The founder of French impressionism, himself at one time an ardent Wagnerite, tells us that his awakening appreciation of

* 'César Franck,' Paris, 1912.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

the charm of Russian music turned him from following in Wagner's step. Whatever may have been its source the distinctive and insinuatingly contagious style of Debussy has undoubtedly been the first potent influence toward a reaction against Wagnerism.

A brief word may be added as to the Wagner influence as we find it in the other European nations. Of conspicuous names those of Grieg and Tschaikowsky fall easily into our list of Wagner followers. Undeniably national and individual as both have been, each had his Wagner enthusiasm. Into the works of the former there crept so much of Wagner that Hanslick wittily called him 'Wagner in sealskins,' while Tschaikowsky, continually sounding his anti-Wagnerian sentiments, is at times an unconscious imitator. From England there has come in recent years in the work of one whom Strauss called 'the first English progressive,' Edward Elgar, a voice which in its most eloquent moments echoes that of Wagner. But perhaps the most significant proof of the far-reaching influence of Wagner's art is the readiness with which it was welcomed by Italy. As early as 1869 Wagner found his first Italian champion in Boïto and to him was due the early production of Wagner's works at Bologna. Wagner's influence on Italian composers has been largely in the respect of dramatic reform rather than actual musical expression; the accusations of Wagnerism which greeted the appearance of Verdi's *Aïda* were as groundless as the same cry against *Carmen*. In *Aïda* Verdi forsook the superficial form of opera text that had been that of his earlier works and adopted a form more sincerely dramatic. This was, of course, under the direct influence of Wagner's reform as was the more serious vein of the musical setting to this and Verdi's two last operas, 'Othello' and 'Falstaff'; but in musical idiom Verdi remained distinctively free from Wagner's influence.

THE WAGNERIAN INFLUENCE

With this brief survey in mind the deduction as to the lasting value of Wagner's theories and practices may be easily drawn. Wagner, the composer, has set his indelible mark upon the dramatic music of his age and that of a succeeding age, and, becoming a classic, he remains the inevitable model of modern musical thought. Wagner as dramatist constitutes a somewhat less forceful influence. Despite the inestimable value of his dramatic reform and its widespread influence on operatic art Wagner's music dramas must remain the unique work of their author and so peculiarly the product of his universal genius that general imitation of them is at once prohibited by the fact that the world will not soon again see a man thus generously endowed.

Added proof of the enormous interest which has attached itself to Wagner and his works is found in the large and constantly increasing mass of Wagner literature, more voluminous than that heretofore devoted to any musician. The ten volumes which comprise Wagner's own collected writings,* contain much of vital interest, as well as a mass of unimportant items. Besides the poems of the operas, beginning with *Rienzi*, we find all of those essays to which reference has been already made, in which he advances his æsthetic and philosophic principles. There is besides these a quantity of exceedingly interesting autobiographical and reminiscent articles and many valuable pages of hints as to the interpretation of his own and of other works. Of greater interest to the general reader is the two-volume autobiography.† This work covers Wagner's life from childhood to the year 1864, the year in which he met King Ludwig. Dictated to his wife and left in trust to her for publication at a stated time after his death, the book was eagerly awaited and attracted wide

* 'The Prose Writings of Richard Wagner' (8 vols.), translated by W. Ashton Ellis, London, 1899.

† *Mein Leben*, 1913 (Eng. tr.: 'My Life,' 1913).

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

attention on its appearance in 1911. In its intense subjectivity, it gives us a vivid and intimate picture of Wagner's artistic life, and in its narration of external events several episodes of his life, which had before been matters of more or less mystery, are explained. The publication of this autobiography was the signal for a last and faint raising of the voice of detraction against Wagner's character in its egotistical isolation. The unrelenting attitude of aggressiveness that he adopted was only the natural attendant upon his genius and its forceful expression. To him who reads aright this record of Wagner's life must come the realization that self-protection often forced upon him these external attitudes of a selfish nature, and that his supreme confidence in his own power to accomplish his great ideals warranted him in overcoming in any way all obstacles which retarded the accomplishment.

B. L.

CHAPTER XII

NEO-ROMANTICISM: JOHANNES BRAHMS AND CÉSAR FRANCK

The antecedents of Brahms—The life and personality of Brahms—The idiosyncrasies of his music in rhythm, melody, and harmony as expressions of his character—His works for pianoforte, for voice, and for orchestra; the historical position of Brahms—Franck's place in the romantic movement—His life, personality, and the characteristics of his style; his works as the expression of religious mysticism.

I

IN the lifetime of Beethoven tendencies became evident in music which during the nineteenth century developed extraordinarily both rapidly and far, and brought about new forms and an almost wholly new art of orchestration. Music underwent transformations parallel to those which altered the face of all the arts and even of philosophy, and which were closely dependent on the general political, social, and æsthetic forces set loose throughout Europe by the French Revolution. In the music of Beethoven himself many of these alterations are suggested, foreshadowed, actually anticipated. The last pianoforte sonatas, the Mass in D, the Ninth Symphony and the last string quartets were all colored by an intense subjectivity. The form was free and strange. They were and are to-day incomprehensible without deep study, they are not objectively evident. They are dim and trackless realms of music, hinting at infinite discoveries and possibilities. They were not models, not types for his successors to imitate, but gospels of freedom and messages

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

from remote valleys and mountains. They cast a light over distances yet to be attained. At the same time they were the expression of his own soul, profoundly personal and mystical. We need not, however, look here for traces of the French Revolution nor signs of the times. This is not proud and conscious glorification of the individual, nor the confident expression of a mood, at once relaxed and self-assertive. This is the music of a man who was first cut off from the world, who was forced within himself, so to speak, by illness, by loneliness, by complete deafness, whose heart and soul were imprisoned in an aloofness, who could find inspiration but in the mystery and power of his own being. What he brought forth from such heights and depths was to be infinitely suggestive to musicians of a later age.

During the last half dozen years of Beethoven's life, two younger men, strongly affected by the new era of freedom, were molding and coloring music in other ways. Schubert, fired by the poetry of the German romanticists, was pouring out songs full of freshness and the new spirit, expressing in music the wildness of storm and night, the gruesome forest-rider, the fairy whisperings of the brook, the still sadness of frosty winter. Under his hands the symphony became fanciful, soft, and poetical. He filled it with enchanting melody, with the warm-blooded life of folk-songs and native rhythm, veiled it in shifting harmonies. Beside him reckless Weber, full of German fairy tales, of legends of chivalry, sensitive to tone-color, was writing operas dear to the people, part-songs for men loyal to Germany, adorning legend and ballad with splendid colors of sound. Schubert had little grasp of form, which is order in music; Weber had hardly to concern himself with it, since his music was, so to speak, the draperies of a form, of the drama. For each, poetry and legend was the inspiration, romantic poetry and

THE ANTECEDENTS OF BRAHMS

wild legend, essentially Teutonic; for each, rapture and color was the ideal. So it was at the death of Beethoven. Weber was already dead, Schubert had but a year to live. On the one hand, Beethoven the mystic, unfathomed, infinitely suggestive; on the other, Schubert and Weber, the inspired rhapsodist, the genial colorist, prototypes of much to come. On every hand were imminent needs, unexplored possibilities.

In the amazingly short space of twenty-five years there grew up from these seeds a new music, most firmly rooted in Schubert and Weber, at times fed by the spirit of Beethoven. The rhapsodist gloried in his mood, the colorist painted gorgeous panoramas; there were poets in music, on the one hand, and painters in music, on the other. The question of form and design, the most vital for music if not for all the arts, has been met in many ways. The poets have limited themselves, or at any rate have found their best and most characteristic expression, in small forms. They publish long cycles made up of short pieces. Often, as in the case of Schumann's *Papillons*, *Carnaval*, or *Kreisleriana*, the short pieces are more or less closely held together in their relationship to one fanciful central idea. They are scenes at a dress ball, comments and impressions of two or three individualities at a fête, various expressions in music of different aspects of a man's character. Or they may have no unity as in the case of Chopin's preludes, studies, sets of mazurkas, or Mendelssohn's 'Songs Without Words,' or Schumann's *Bunte Blätter*. The painters in music have devised new forms. They prefer to paint pictures of action, they become narrative painters in music. The mighty Berlioz paints progressive scenes from a man's life; Liszt gives us the battle between Paganism and Christianity in a series of pictures, the whole of life in its progress toward death, the dreams, the tor-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

ture and the ultimate triumph of Mazeppa, of Tasso. They have acquired overpowering skill with the brush and palette, they write for tremendous orchestras, their scores are brilliant, often blinding. Their narratives move on with great rush. We are familiar with the story, follow it in the music. We know the guise in music of the characters which enact it, they are constantly before us, moving on, rarely reminiscent. The bands of strict form break before the armies of characters, of ideas, of events, and we need no balance, for the story holds us and we are not upset. But these painters, and we in their suite, are less thrilled by the freedom of their poem and by the stride of their narrative than bewitched and fired by the gorgeousness of the colors which they employ with bold and masterly hand.

We shall look relatively in vain for such colors in the music of the 'poets.' They are lyricists, they express moods in music and each little piece partakes of the color of the mood which it enfolds—is in general delicate and monochrome. The poets are essentially composers for the pianoforte. They have chosen the instrument suitable for the home and for intimate surroundings, and their choice bars the brilliancy of color from their now exquisite now passionate and profoundly moving art. They are musicians of the spirit and the mood, meditative, genuine, passionate, tearful and gay by turn. The others are musicians of the senses and the act, dramatists, tawdry charlatans or magnificently glorious spokesmen, leaders, challengers, who speak with the resonance of trumpets and seduce with the honey of soft music.

Now the poets are descended from Schubert and the painters from Weber. Both are unwavering in their allegiance to Beethoven, but the spirit of Beethoven has touched them little. The poets more than the painters are akin to him, but they lack his breadth

THE ANTECEDENTS OF BRAHMS

and power. The painters have something of his daring strength, but they stand over against him, are not in line with him. Such is the condition of music only twenty-five years after the death of him whom all, save Chopin, who worshipped Mozart, hailed as supreme master.

In September, 1853, Brahms came to Schumann, then conductor at Düsseldorf on the Rhine, provided with a letter of introduction from Joseph Joachim, the renowned violinist, but two years his senior. Brahms was at that time just over twenty years of age. He brought with him manuscripts of his own composing and played for Schumann. A short while before he had played the same things for Liszt at Weimar. Of his three weeks' stay as Liszt's guest very bitter accounts have been written. If Brahms was tired and fell asleep while Liszt was playing to him, if Liszt was merely seeking to impose himself upon the young musician when he played that young man's scherzo at sight from manuscript, and altered it, well and good. Brahms was, at any rate—thanks in this case, too, to Joachim—received in the throne-room of the painters in music, and nothing came of it. He departed the richer by an elegant cigar-case, gift from his host; and in later years still spoke of Liszt's unique, incomparable and imitable playing. But in the throne-room of the poets he was hailed with unbounded rejoicing. Schumann took again in his gifted hand the pen so long idle and wrote the article for the *New Journal of Music*, which proclaimed the advent of the true successor of Beethoven. It was a daring prophecy and it had a tremendous effect upon Brahms and upon his career; for it was a gage thrown to him he could not neglect and though it at once created an opposition, vehement and longstanding, it screwed his best and most genuine efforts to the sticking place. Never through the rest of his life did he relax the self-imposed struggle to

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

make himself worthy of Schumann's confidence and hope.

Meanwhile, among the painters, directly in the line from Weber, another man had come to the fore, a colossal genius such as perhaps the world had never seen before nor is like to see again. Richard Wagner, at that time just twice the age of Brahms, was in exile at Zürich. He had written *Rienzi*, 'The Flying Dutchman,' *Tannhäuser*, and *Lohengrin*. All had been performed. The libretto of the Ring was done and the music to *Rheingold* composed and orchestrated. Schumann disapproved. It is hard to understand why he, so recklessly generous, so willing to see the best in the music of all the younger school, the ardent supporter of Berlioz, should have turned away from Wagner. One must suspect a touch of personal aversion. He was not alone. No man ever had fiercer battle to wage than Wagner, nor did any man ever bring to battle a more indomitable courage and will. Liszt was his staunch supporter; and to Liszt, too, both Schumann and his wife had aversion, easier to understand than their aversion to Wagner. For Liszt, the virtuoso, was made of gold and tinsel. Liszt, the composer, was made so in part. But Wagner, the musician, was incomparably great, that is to say, his powers were colossal and unlike those of any other, and therefore not to be compared. That Schumann failed to recognize this comes with something of a shock to those who have been amazed at the keenness of his perception, and yet more to those who have rejoiced to find in the musician the nobility and generosity of a great-hearted man. It is obvious that the divergence between poets and painters had by this time become too wide for his unselfish, sympathetic nature to bridge; and thus when Brahms, a young man of twenty, was launched into the world of music he found musicians divided into two camps between which the hostility was to grow

LIFE AND PERSONALITY OF BRAHMS

ever more bitter. Liszt at Weimar, Schumann at Düsseldorf, were the rallying points for the opposing sides, but within a year Schumann's mind failed. The standard was forced upon Brahms, and Liszt gave himself up to Wagner.

It was almost inevitable that the great part of the world of music should be won over by Wagner. One by one the poets seceded, gave way to the influence of Wagner's marvellous power, an influence which Clara Schumann never ceased to deplore. The result was that Brahms was regarded, outside the circle of a few powerful friends, as reactionary. He led, so to speak, a negative existence in music. He was cried down for what he was not, not for what he was. There is no reason to suppose that Brahms suffered thereby. The sale of his compositions constantly increased and after the first few probationary years he never lacked a good income from them. Still, perhaps the majority of musicians were blinded by the controversy to the positive, assertive, progressive elements in Brahms' music. On the other hand, the adherents of Brahms, the 'Brahmins,' as they have been not inaptly called, retaliated by more or less shameful attacks upon Wagner, which later quite justly fell back upon their own heads, to their merited humiliation. They failed to see in him anything but a smasher of tradition, they closed their eyes to his mighty power of construction. In the course of time Wagner's triumph was overwhelming. He remained the successful innovator, and Brahms the follower of ancient tradition.

II

The life of Brahms offers little that is striking or unusual. He was born in Hamburg, the northern city by the sea, on the 7th of May, 1833, of relatively humble

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

parents. His father was a double-bass player in a theatre orchestra. His mother, many years older than his father, and more or less a cripple, seems to have had a deep love for reading and a remarkable memory to retain what she had read. In his earliest childhood Brahms commenced to acquire a knowledge of poetry from his mother, which showed all through his later life in the choice of poems he made for his songs. His ability to play the piano was so evident that his father hoped to send him as a child wonder to tour the United States, from which fate, however, he was saved by the firmness of one of his teachers. Twice in November, 1847, he appeared with others in public, playing conventional show pieces of the facture of Thalberg; but in the next year he gave a recital of his own at which he played Bach, a point of which Kalbeck * makes a trifle too much. The income of the father was very small, and Brahms was not an overwhelming success as a concert pianist. To earn a little money, therefore, he used to play for dancing in taverns along the waterfront; forgetful, we are told, of the rollicking sailors, absorbed in books upon the desk of the piano before him. His early life was not an easy one. It helped to mold him, however, and brought out his enormous perseverance and strength of will. These early days of hardship were never forgotten. He believed they had helped rather than hindered him, a belief which, it must be admitted, is refreshingly manly in contrast to the wail of despised genius so often ringing in the ears of one who reads the lives of the great musicians as they have been penned by their later worshippers. Not long before he died, being occupied with the question of his will and the disposal of his money, he asked his friend, the Swiss writer J. V. Widmann for advice. Widmann suggested that he establish a fund for the support and aid of struggling young

* Max Kalbeck: 'Johannes Brahms,' 3 vols. (1904-11).

LIFE AND PERSONALITY OF BRAHMS

musicians; to which Brahms replied that the genius of such, if it were worth anything, would find its own support and be the stronger for the struggle. The attitude is very characteristic.

Occasional visitors to Hamburg had a strong influence upon the youth. Such were Joachim and Robert and Clara Schumann, though he did not then meet the latter. At the age of nineteen, having already composed the E-flat minor scherzo, the F-sharp minor and C-major sonatas and numerous songs, he went forth on a concert tour with the Bohemian violinist Remenyi. On this tour he again came in touch with Joachim, who furnished him with letters to Liszt at Weimar and the Schumanns at Düsseldorf. Of his stay at Weimar mention has already been made. At Düsseldorf he was received at once into the heart of the family. In striking contrast with the gruffness of later years is the description given by Albert Dietrich of the young man come out of the north to the home of the Schumanns. 'The appearance, as original as interesting, of the youthful almost boyish-looking musician, with his high-pitched voice and long fair hair, made a most attractive impression upon me. I was particularly struck by the characteristic energy of the mouth and serious depths in his blue eyes. . . .' One evening Brahms was asked to play. He played a Toccata of Bach and his own scherzo in E-flat minor 'with wonderful power and mastery; bending his head down over the keys, and, as was his wont in his excitement, humming the melody aloud as he played. He modestly deprecated the torrent of praise with which his performance was greeted. Everyone marvelled at his remarkable talent, and, above all, we young musicians were unanimous in our enthusiastic admiration of the supremely artistic qualities of his playing, at times so powerful or, when occasion demanded it, so exquisitely tender, but always full of character. Soon after there was an

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

excursion to the Grafenberg. Brahms was of the party, and showed himself here in all the amiable freshness and innocence of youth. . . . The young artist was of vigorous physique; even the severest mental work hardly seeming an exertion to him. He could sleep soundly at any hour of the day if he wished to do so. In intercourse with his fellows he was lively, often even exuberant in spirits, occasionally blunt and full of wild freaks. With the boisterousness of youth he would run up the stairs, knock at my door with both fists, and, without awaiting a reply, burst into the room. He tried to lower his strikingly high-pitched voice by speaking hoarsely, which gave it an unpleasant sound.'

All accounts of the young Brahms lay emphasis on his loveliness, his exuberant good spirits, his shining good health and his physical vitality. Clara Schumann wrote in her diary: 'I found a nice stanza in a poem of Bodenstedt's which is just the motto for Johannes:

"In winter I sing as my glass I drain,
For joy that the spring is drawing near;
And when spring comes, I drink again,
For joy that at last it is really here."

Clara, too, admired his playing, and she was competent to judge. 'I always listen to him with fresh admiration,' she wrote. 'I like to watch him while he plays. His face has a noble expression always, but when he plays it becomes even more exalted. And at the same time he always plays quietly, i. e. his movements are always beautiful, not like Liszt's and others'. He was always devoted to Schubert and she remarked that he played Schubert wonderfully. Later in life his playing became careless and loud.

Not half a year after Brahms was received at Düsseldorf Schumann's mind gave way. In February, 1854, he attempted suicide, and immediately after it became necessary to send him to a private sanatorium at En-

LIFE AND PERSONALITY OF BRAHMS

denich. For two years longer he lived. They were years of anguish for his wife, during which Brahms was her unfailing refuge and support. She wrote in her diary that her children might read in after years what now is made known to the world. 'Then came Johannes Brahms. Your father loved and admired him as he did no man except Joachim. He came, like a true comrade, to share all my sorrow; he strengthened the heart that threatened to break, he uplifted my mind, he cheered my spirits whenever and wherever he could, in short, he was in the fullest sense of the word my friend.'

Brahms was profoundly affected by the suffering he witnessed and by the personal grief at the loss of a friend who had meant so much to him. The hearty, boisterous gaiety such as he poured into parts of his youthful compositions, into the scherzo of the F-minor sonata, for instance, and into the finale of the C-major, never again found unqualified expression in his music. His character was set and hardened. From then on he locked his emotions within himself. Little by little he became harsh, rejected, often roughly, kindness and praise—made himself a coat of iron and shut his nature from the world. Ruthlessly outspoken and direct, seemingly heedless of the sensibilities of those who loved him dearly and whom he dearly loved, he presents only a proud, fierce defiance to grief, to misfortune, even to life itself. What such self-discipline cost him only his music expresses. Three of his gloomiest and most austere works came first into his mind during the horror of Schumann's illness; the D-minor concerto for the piano, the first movement of the C-minor quartet, and the first movement of the C-minor symphony.

Meanwhile he was earning a precarious living by giving concerts here and there, not always with success; and he had begun a relentlessly severe course

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

of self-training in his art. Here Joachim and he were mutually helpful to each other. Every week each would send to the other exercises in music, fragments of compositions, expecting in return frank and merciless criticism. In the fall of 1859 he accepted a position at Detmold as pianist and leader of the chorus. A small orchestra was at his service, which offered him opportunity to study instrumental effects, especially wind instruments, and for which he wrote the two serenades in A and in D major. Likewise he profited by his association with the chorus, and laid at Detmold the foundation for his technique in writing for voices, which has very rarely been equalled. Duties in this new position occupied him only during the musical season, from September to December. At other times he played in concert or went back to his home in Hamburg. At one concert in Leipzig in 1859 he was actually hissed, either because his own concerto which he played or his manner of playing it was offensive. The critics were viciously hostile. Brahms took the defeat manfully, evidently ranked it as he did his days of playing for the Hamburg sailors, among the experiences which were in the long run stimulating. At Hamburg he organized a chorus of women's voices for which many of his loveliest works were then and subsequently composed. In the chorus was a young Viennese lady from whom, according to Kalbeck, he first heard Viennese folk-music. With Vienna henceforth in mind he continued in his work at Detmold until 1862, when he broke away from North Germany and went to establish himself in the land of his desire. He came before the public first as a pianist, later as a composer. For a year he was conductor of the *Singakademie*. Afterward he never held an office except during the three years 1872-1875, when he was conductor of the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde*.

The death of his mother in 1867 aggravated his ten-

LIFE AND PERSONALITY OF BRAHMS

dency to forbidding self-discipline. The result in music was the 'German Requiem,' which even those who cannot sympathize with his music in general have willingly granted to be one of the great masterpieces of music. As it was first performed at a concert of the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* in Vienna in April, 1867, it consisted of only three numbers. To these he later added four, and in this form it was performed on Good Friday, April 10, 1868, in Bremen. Clara Schumann, who was present, wrote in her diary that she had been more moved by it than by any other sacred music she had ever heard. It established Brahms' reputation as a composer, a reputation which steadily grew among conservatives. A group of distinguished critics, musicians, and men of unusual intellectual gifts gathered about him in Vienna. Among them were Dr. Theodor Billroth, the famous surgeon, probably his most intimate friend; Eduard Hanslick and Max Kalbeck among the critics, K. Goldmark and Johann Strauss among the musicians. Joachim was a lifelong friend, Von Bülow and Fritz Simrock, the publisher, were staunch admirers, and in Dvořák he later took a deep interest. Journeys to Italy and to Switzerland took him from Vienna for some time every year, and he often spent a part of the summer with Clara Schumann at various German watering places.

A few works were inspired by unusual events, such as the 'Song of Triumph' to celebrate the victory of the German armies in the war against France, and the 'Academic Festival Overture,' composed in gratitude to the university at Breslau which conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. A similar degree was offered by the University of Cambridge, which Brahms was forced to refuse because he was unwilling to undertake the voyage to England.

He was an omnivorous reader and an enthusiastic amateur of art. Regular in his habits, a stubborn and

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

untiring worker, he composed almost unceasingly to the time of his last illness and death in April, 1897. The great works for the orchestra comprise 'Variations on a Theme of Haydn's,' the 'Academic Festival Overture,' and the 'Tragic Overture,' four great symphonies, the second concerto for piano and orchestra, the concerto for violin and orchestra, and a concerto for violin and violoncello. The great choral works are the 'Requiem,' 'The Song of Triumph,' and 'The Song of Destiny,' a cantata, 'Rinaldo,' and a great number of songs. Besides these there are many sets of works for the piano, all in short forms, generally called caprices or intermezzi, and several sets of variations, one on a theme of Paganini, one on a theme of Handel; sonatas for piano and violin, and piano and violoncello; the magnificent quintet in F-minor for piano and strings, sonatas for clarinet and piano, string quartets, piano quartets, and trios.

III

Brahms is to be ranked among the romantic composers in that all his work is distinctly a reflection of his own personality, in that every emotion, mood, dream, or whatever may be the cause and inspiration of his music is invariably tinged with the nature through which it passed. The lovable, boisterous frankness which was characteristic of him as a young man was little by little curbed, subdued, levelled, so to speak. He cultivated an austere intellectual grasp of himself, tending to crush all sentimentality and often all sentiment. We may not hesitate to believe his own word that Clara Schumann was dearer to him than anyone else upon the earth, nor yet can we fail to read in her diary that she suffered more than anyone else from his uncompromising intellectuality. If she at-

IDIOSYNCRASIES OF BRAHMS' MUSIC

tempted to praise or encourage him she met with a heartless intellectual rebuke. Not long after Schumann died, he wrote a letter to reprimand her for taking his own cause too much to heart. 'You demand too rapid and enthusiastic recognition of talent which you happen to like. Art is a republic. You should take that as a motto. You are far too aristocratic. . . . Do not place one artist in a higher rank and expect the others to regard him as their superior, as dictator. His gifts will make him a beloved and respected citizen of this republic, but will not make him consul or emperor.' To which she replied: 'It is true that I am often greatly struck by the richness of your genius, that you always seem to me one on whom heaven has poured out its best gifts, that I love and honor you for the sake of many glorious works. All this has fastened its roots deep down in my heart, so, dearest Johannes, do not trouble to kill it all by your cold philosophizing.' Clara exerted herself to bring his compositions before the public. A short extract from her diary will show how Brahms rewarded her efforts. 'I was in agonies of nervousness but I played them [variations on a theme of Schumann's] well all the same, and they were much applauded. Johannes, however, hurt me very much by his indifference. He declared that he could no longer bear to hear the variations, it was altogether dreadful to him to listen to anything of his own and to have to sit by and do nothing. Although I can well understand this feeling I cannot help finding it hard when one has devoted all one's powers to a work, and the composer himself has not a kind word for it.' The tenderness which would have meant much to her he failed to show. He made himself rough and harsh, stern and severe. That a man could write of him as 'a steadfast, strong, manly nature, self-contained and independent, striving ever for the highest, an uncompromisingly true and unbending artistic con-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

science, strict even to harshness, rigidly exacting,' wins the adherent, wins loyalty and admiration, hides but does not fill the lack.

Undoubtedly, as a son of a gloomy northern land, the tendency to self-restraint was a racial heritage. Outward facts of his life show that he was himself conscious of it and that he tried in a measure to escape from it. His love of gay Vienna, his journeys into Switzerland, his oft-repeated search for color and spontaneous emotion in Italy, are all signs of a man trying to be free from his own nature. 'But that, in spite of Vienna,' writes Walter Niemann, 'he remained a true son of the sea-girt province, we know from all accounts of his life. Melancholy, deep, powerful and earnest feeling, uncommunicativeness, a noble restraint of emotion, meditateness, even morbidness, the inclination to be alone with himself, the inability both as man and as artist to get away from himself, are characteristics which must be ever assigned to him.' *

There is something heroic in this, a grim strength, the chill of northern forests and northern seas, loneliness and the power to endure suffering in silence. It is an old ideal. The thane, were he wanderer or seafarer, never forgot it was his duty to lock his sorrow within his breast. That it might lead and has led to morbidness, to taciturnity, on the one hand, is no less evident than that, on the other, it may lead to splendid fortitude and nobility. This old ideal has found its first full expression in music through Brahms. We come upon a paradox, the man who would express nothing, who has in music expressed all.

It is striking how the man reveals himself in his music. The rigorous self-discipline and restraint find their counterpart in the absolute perfection of the structure, the polyphonic skill, the intellectual poise and certainty. There is a resultant lack of obvious

* Walter Niemann: *Die Musik seit Richard Wagner*, Berlin, 1914.

IDIOSYNCRASIES OF BRAHMS' MUSIC

color, a deliberate suppression of sensuousness, so marked that Rubinstein could call him, with Joachim, the high-priest of virtue, a remark which carries the antidote to its own sting, if one will be serious. And the music of Brahms is essentially serious. In general it lacks appealing charm and humor. Its beauties yield only to thoughtful study, but the harvest is rich, though often sombre. He belongs to the poets, not the painters, in that his short pieces are saturated with mood, even and rather monochrome. The mood, too, is prevailingly dark, not light. That he could at times rise out of it and give way to lightheartedness and frank humor no one can deny who will recall, for instance, the 'Academic Festival Overture,' where the mood is boisterous and full of fun, student fun. The Passacaglia in the Fourth Symphony hints at it as well, and some of the songs, and the last movement of the violin concerto. But these are in strong contrast to the general spirit of his music. His happier moods are ever touched with wistfulness or with sadness. In such vein he is often at his best, as, for example, in the allegretto of the first and of the second symphonies. Such a mischievous humor as Beethoven expressed in the scherzo of the Eroica Symphony, such peasant joviality as rollicks through the scherzo of the Pastoral, such wit as glances through the eighth symphony, were, if he had them at all within him, too oppressed to find utterance and excite laughter or even smiles. As a boy, it will be remembered, he was often overbrimming with good spirits, full of freakish sport. The first three sonatas reflect this. Then came the illness of Schumann, his adored friend, and, knowing what grief and suffering were, he fortified himself against them. He took a wound to heart and never after was off his guard.

It cannot be said that his music is wholly lacking in humor. Reckless, 'unbuttoned' humor is indeed

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

rarely if ever evident; but the broader humor, the sense of balance and proportion, strengthens his works almost without exception. If it can be said that he was never able to free himself from a mood of twilight and the northern sea, it cannot be said that he was so sunk in this mood as to lose himself in unhealthy morbidity, to lose perspective and the power of wide vision. Above all else his music is broadly planned. It is wide and spacious, not to say vast. There is enormous force in it, vigor of mind and of spirit, too. Surcharged it may not be with heat and color, but great winds blow through it, it is expansive, it lifts the listener to towering heights, never drags him to ecstatic torture in the fiery lake of distressed passion and hysterical grief. For this reason Liszt could say of some of it that it was 'sanitary,' and here again we must be serious not to smart with the sting.

No musician ever devoted himself more wholeheartedly to the study of folk-music, but he failed to imbue his works with the spirit of it. One has but to contrast him with Haydn or with Schubert to be convinced. The *Liebeslieder* waltzes, and the set of waltzes arranged for four hands, charming as they are, lack the true folk-spirit of spontaneity and warmth. For all their seeming simplicity they hold back something; they are veiled and therefore suggestive, not immediate. They breathe of the ever-changing sea, not of the warm and stable earth. His admiration for Johann Strauss is well known. That he himself could not write waltzes of the same mad, irresistible swing was to him a source of conscious regret. Yet the accompaniments which he wrote for series of German folk-songs are ineffably beautiful. In them he interprets the spirit of the northern races to which by birth and character he belonged. That which would have made him the interpreter of all mankind, that quick emotion which is the essence of the human race,

IDIOSYNCRASIES OF BRAHMS' MUSIC

the current of warm blood which flows through us all and makes us all as one, he bound and concealed within himself. He cannot speak the common idiom.

Hence his music will impress the listener upon the first hearing as intellectual, and, as a rule, study and familiarity alone reveal the depth of genuine emotional feeling from which it sprang. Therefore it is true of him in the same measure as it is true of Bach and Beethoven that the beauty of his music grows ever richer with repeated hearings, and does not fade nor become stale. It is not, however, intellectual in the sense that it is always deliberately contrived, but only in so far as it reflects the austere control of mind over emotion which was characteristic of him as a man. One is conscious always of control and a consequent power to sustain. In rhythm, in melody and in harmony this control has left its mark. It is to be doubted if the music of any other composer is so full of idiosyncrasies of expression. Strangely enough these are not limitations. They are not mannerisms in the sense that they are habits, mere formulas of expression, unconsciously affected and riding the composer to death. They are subtly connected with and suitable to the quality of emotion which they serve to express, that emotion which, as we have seen, is always under control. They are signs of strength, not of weakness.

His rhythm is varied by devices of syncopation which are not to be found used to such an extent in the works of any other of the great composers. Especially frequent is the alteration of two beats of three values into three beats of two, an alteration practised by the early polyphonic writers and called the *hemiolia*. Brahms employed it not only with various beats of the measure but with the measures themselves. Thus two measures of $3/4$ time often become in value three measures of $2/4$ time. Notice, for instance in the sonata for piano in F-minor the part for the left hand

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

in measures seven to sixteen of the first movement. In this passage the left hand is clearly playing in 2/4 time, the right in 3/4; yet the sum of rhythmical values for each at the end of the passage is the same. It is to be noted that, whereas Schumann frequently lost himself in syncopation, or, in other words, overstepped the mark so that the original beat was wholly lost and with it the effect of syncopation, at any rate to the listener, Brahms always contrived that the original beat should be suggested if not emphasized, and his employment of syncopation, therefore, is always effective as such. He acquired extraordinary skill in the combination of different rhythms at the same time, and in the modification of tempo by modification of the actual value of the notes. The variety and complexity of the rhythm of his music are rarely lost on a listener, though often they serve only to bewilder him until the secret becomes clear. Within the somewhat rigid bounds of form and counterpoint, his music is made wonderfully flexible, while by syncopation he actually makes the natural beat more relentless. Mystery, rebellion, divergence, the world-old struggle between law and chaos he could express either in fine suggestions or in strong contradictions by his power over rhythm in music. In the broader rhythm of structure, too, he was free. Phrases of five bars are constantly met with in his music.

His melodies are indescribably large. They have the poise of great and far-reaching thought and yet rarely lack spontaneity. Indeed, as a song writer he is unexcelled. In his instrumental music there is often a predominance of lyricism. Though he was eminently skillful in the treatment of melodic motifs, of small sections of melody, though his mastery of polyphonic writing is second to none, except Bach, parts of the symphonies seem to be carried by broad, flowing melodies, which in their largeness and sweep have the

IDIOSYNCRASIES OF BRAHMS' MUSIC

power to take the listener soaring into vast expanses. To cite but one instance, the melodies of the first movement of the D-major symphony are truly lyrical. In them alone there is wonderful beauty, wonderful power. They are not meaningless. Of that movement it is not to be said what a marvellous structure has Brahms been able to build out of motives in themselves meaningless, in the hands of another insignificant. The beauty of the movement is largely in the materials out of which it is built. Of the melodies of Beethoven it may be said they have infinite depth, of those of Schubert that they have perennial freshness, of those of Schumann romance and tenderness, but of Brahms that they have power, the power of the eagle to soar. They are frequently composed of the tones of a chord, sometimes of the simple tonic triad. Notice in this regard the first melodies of all the symphonies, the songs 'Sapphic Ode,' *Die Mainacht*, *Wiegenlied*, and countless others.

His harmonies are, as would be expected from one to whom softness was a stranger, for the most part diatonic. They are virile, almost never sensuous. Sharp dissonances are frequent, augmented intervals rare, and often his harmonies are made 'thick' by doubling the third even in very low registers. There is at times a strong suggestion of the old modal harmony, especially in works written for chorus without accompaniment. Major and minor alternate unexpectedly, the two modes seeming in his music interchangeable. He is fond of extremely wide intervals, very low and very high tones at once, and the empty places without sound between call forth the spirit of barren moorland, the mystery of dreary places, of the deserted sea.

In all Brahms' music, whether for piano, for voices, combinations of instruments, or for orchestra, these idiosyncrasies are present. They are easily recognized,

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

easily seized upon by the critic; but taken together they do not constitute the sum of Brahms' genius. They are expressive of his broad intellectual grasp; but the essence of his genius consists far rather in a powerful, deep, and genuine emotional feeling which is seldom lacking in all that he composed. It is hard to get at, hard for the player, the singer, and the leader to reveal, but the fact none the less remains that Brahms is one of the very great composers, one who truly had something to say. One may feel at times that he set himself deliberately to say it in a manner new and strange; but it is none the less evident to one who has given thought to the interpretation of what lies behind his music, that the form of his utterance, though at first seemingly awkward and willful, is perfectly and marvellously fitting.

IV

Brahms' pianoforte works are with comparatively few exceptions in small forms. There are rhapsodies and ballades and many intermezzi and capriccios. Unlike Schumann he never gives these pieces a poetic title to suggest the mood in which they are steeped, though sometimes, rarely indeed, he prefixes a motto, a stanza from a poem, as in the andante of the F-minor sonata, or the title of a poem, as in the ballade that is called 'Edward,' or the intermezzo in E-flat major, both suggested by Scotch poems. The pieces are almost without exception difficult. The ordinary technique of the pianist is hardly serviceable, for common formulas of accompaniment he seldom uses, but rather unusual and wide groupings of notes which call for the greatest and most rapid freedom of the arm and a largeness of hand. Mixed rhythms abound, and difficult cross-accents. For one even who has mastered the technical difficulties of Chopin and Liszt new difficul-

BRAHMS' WORKS

ties appear. He seems to stand out of the beaten path of virtuosity. His aversion to display has carefully stripped all his music of conventional flourish and adornment, and his pianoforte music is seldom brilliant, never showy, but rather sombre. What it lacks in brilliance, on the other hand, it makes up in richness and sonority; and when mastered will prove, though ungrateful for the hand, adapted to the most intimate spirit of the instrument. The two sets of variations on a theme of Paganini make the utmost demands upon hand and head of the player. It may be questioned if any music for the piano is technically more difficult. One has only to compare them with the Liszt-Paganini studies to realize how extraordinarily new Brahms' attitude toward the piano was. In Liszt transcendent, blinding virtuosity; in Brahms inexhaustible richness.

The songs, too, are not less difficult and not more brilliant. The breadth of phrases and melodies require of the singer a tremendous power to sustain, and yet they are so essentially lyrical that the finest shading is necessary fully to bring out the depth of the feeling in them. The accompaniments are complicated by the same idiosyncrasies of rhythm and spacing which are met with in the piano music, yet they are so contrived that the melodies are not taken and woven into them as in so many of the exquisite songs of Schumann, but that the melodies are set off by them. In writing for choruses or for groups of voices, he manifested a skill well-nigh equal to that of Bach and Handel. He seems often to have gone back to the part-songs of the sixteenth century for his models.

Compared with the scores of Wagner his orchestral works are sombre and gray. The comparison has led many to the conclusion that Brahms had no command of orchestral color. This is hardly true. Vivid coloring is for the most part lacking, but such coloring would be wholly out of place in the expression of the

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

emotion which gives his symphonies their grandeur. His art of orchestration, like his art of writing for the pianoforte, is peculiarly his own, and again is the most fitting imaginable to the quality of his inspiration. It is often striking. The introduction to the last movement of the first symphony, the coda of the first movement of the second symphony, the adagio of the fourth symphony are all points of color which as color cannot be forgotten; and in all his works for orchestra this is what Hugo Riemann calls a 'gothic' interweaving of parts, which, if it be not a subtle coloration, is at any rate most beautiful shading. On the whole, it is inconceivable that Brahms should have scored his symphonies otherwise than he has scored them. As they stand they are representative of the nature of the man, to whom brilliance and sensuousness were perhaps too often to be distrusted. Much has been made of the well-known fact that not a few of his works, and among them one of his greatest, the quintet in F minor for pianoforte and strings, were slow to take their final color in his mind. The D minor concerto for piano and orchestra was at one time to have been a symphony, the great quintet was originally a sonata for two pianos, the orchestral variations on a theme of Haydn, too, were first thought of for two pianos, and the waltzes for pianoforte, four hands, were partially scored for orchestra. But this may be as well accounted for by his evident and self-confessed hesitation in approaching the orchestra as by insensitiveness to tone color. The concerto in D minor is opus 15, the quintet opus 34, the Haydn variations opus 56. The first symphony, on the other hand, is opus 68. After this all doubt of color seems to have disappeared.

Analysis of the great works is reserved for later volumes. The 'Requiem,' the quintet for piano and strings, the 'Song of Destiny,' the overwhelmingly beautiful concerto for violin and orchestra, the songs, the songs

THE HISTORICAL POSITION OF BRAHMS

for women's voices with horn and harp, the 'Academic Festival Overture,' and the 'Tragic Overture,' the works for pianoforte, the trios, quartets and quintets for various instruments, the four mighty symphonies—all bear the stamp of the man and of his genius in ways which have been hinted at. No matter how small the form, there is suggestion of poise and of great breadth of opinion. It is this spirit of expanse that will ever make his music akin to that of Bach and Beethoven. Schumann's prophecy was bold. Some believe that it has been fulfilled, that Brahms is in truth the successor of Beethoven. Whether or not Brahms will stand with Bach and Beethoven as one of the three greatest composers it is far too early to say. The limitations of his character and of his temperament are obvious and his music has not escaped them. On the other hand, the depth and grandeur, the heroic strength, the power over rhythm, over melody, and over harmony belong only to the highest in music. He was of the line of poets descended from Schubert through Schumann, but he had a firmer grasp than they. His music is more strongly built, is both deeper and higher. Its sombreness has been unjustly aggravated by comparison with Wagner, but the time has come when the two men are no longer judged in relation to each other, when they are found to be of stuff too different to be compared any more than fire and water can be compared. They are sprung of radically different stock. It might almost be said that they are made up of different elements. If with any composers, he can only be compared with Bach and Beethoven. His perfect workmanship nearly matches that of the former; but Bach, for all the huge proportions of his great works, is a subtle composer, and Brahms is not subtle. The harmonies of Bach are chromatic, those of Brahms, as we have seen, are diatonic. His forms are near those of Beethoven, and his rugged spirit as well.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

His symphonies, in spite of the lyrical side of his genius which is evident in them, can stand beside those of the master of Bonn and lose none of their stature. But he lacks the comic spirit which sparkles ever and again irrepressibly in the music of Beethoven. He is indubitably a product of the movement which, for lack of a more definite name, we must call romantic; and, though it has been said with truth that some of the music of Beethoven and much of Bach is romantic, it cannot be denied that the romantic movement brought to music qualities which are not evident in the works of the earlier masters. The romanticists in every art took themselves extremely seriously as individuals. From their relationship to life as a whole, to the state, and to man they often rebelled, even when making a great show of patriotism. A reaction was inevitable, tending to realism, cynicism, even pessimism. Brahms stood upon the outer edge of romanticism, on the threshold of the movement to come. He took himself seriously, not however with enjoyment in individual liberty, with conscious indulgence in mood and reverie, but with grim determination to shape himself and his music to an ideal, which, were it only that of perfect law, was fixed above the attainment of the race. If, as it has been often written, Beethoven's music expresses the triumph of man over destiny, Brahms may well speak of a triumph in spite of destiny. That over which Beethoven triumphed was the destiny which touches man; that in spite of which and amid which the music of Brahms stands firm and secure is the destiny of the universe, of the stars and planets whirling through the soundless, unfathomable night of space, not man's soul exultant but man's reason unafraid, unshaken by the cry of the heart which finds no consolation.

FRANCK'S PLACE IN THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT

V

The drift of romanticism toward realism is easy to trace in all the arts. There were, however, artists of all kinds who were caught up, so to speak, from the current into a life of the spirit, who championed neither the glory of the senses, as Wagner, nor the indomitable power of reason, as Brahms, but preserved a serenity and calm, a sort of confident, nearly ascetic rapture, elevated above the turmoil of the world, standing not with nor against, but floating above. Such an artist in music was César Franck, growing up almost unnoticed between Wagner and Brahms, now to be ranked as one of the greatest composers of the second half of the century. He is as different from them as they are from each other. Liszt, the omniscient, knew of him, had heard him play the organ in the church of Ste. Clotilde, where in almost monastic seclusion the greater part of his life flowed on, had likened him to the great Sebastian Bach, had gone away marvelling; but only a small band of pupils knew him intimately and the depth of his genius as a composer.

His life was retired. He was indifferent to lack of appreciation. When, through the efforts of his devoted disciples, his works were at rare intervals brought to public performance, he was quite forgetful of the cold, often hostile, audience, intent only to compare the sound of his music as he heard it with the thought he had had in his soul, happy if the sound were what he had conceived it would be. Of envy, meanness, jealousy, of all the darker side of life, in fact, he seems to have taken no account. Nor by imagination could he picture it, nor express it in his music, which is unfailingly luminous and exalted. Most striking in his nature was a gentle, unwavering, confident candor, and in his music there is scarcely a hint of doubt, of inquiring, or of

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

struggle. It suggests inevitably the cathedral, the joyous calm of religious faith, spiritual exaltation, even radiance.

His life, though not free in early years from hardship, was relatively calm and uneventful. He was born in Liège in December, 1822, eleven years after Wagner, eleven years before Brahms, and from the start was directed to music by his father. In the course of his early training at Liège he acquired remarkable skill as a virtuoso, and his father had hopes of exploiting his gifts in wide concert tours. In 1835 he moved with his family to Paris and remained there seven years; at the end of which, having amazed his instructors and judges at the Conservatoire, among whom, be it noted, the venerable Cherubini, and won a special prize, he was called from further study by the dictates of his father and went back to Liège to take up his career as a concert pianist. For some reason this project was abandoned at the end of two years, and he returned to Paris, there to pass the remainder of his life.

At first he was organist at the church of Notre Dame de Lorette, later at Ste. Clotilde, and in 1872 he was appointed professor of the organ at the Conservatoire. To the end of his life he gave lessons in organ and pianoforte playing, here and there, and in composition to a few chosen pupils. He was elected member of the Legion of Honor in 1885; not, however, in recognition of his gifts as a composer, but only of his work as professor of organ at the Conservatoire. He died on the 8th of November, 1890. At the time of his marriage, in 1848, he resolved to save from the pressure of work to gain a livelihood an hour or two of every day for composition—time, as he himself expressed it, to think. The hours chosen were preferably in the early morning and to the custom, never broken in his lifetime, we owe his great compositions, penned in those few moments of rest from a busy life. He wrote in all forms,

CÉSAR FRANCK

operas, oratorios, cantatas, works for piano, for string quartet, concertos, sonatas, and symphonies.

With the exception of a few early pieces for piano all his work bears the stamp of his personality. Like Brahms, he has pronounced idiosyncrasies, among which his fondness for shifting harmonies is the most constantly obvious. The ceaseless alteration of chords, the almost unbroken gliding by half-steps, the lithe sinuousness of all the inner voices seem to wrap his music in a veil, to render it intangible and mystical. Diatonic passages are rare, all is chromatic. Parallel to this is his use of short phrases, which alone are capable of being treated in this shifting manner. His melodies are almost invariably dissected, they seldom are built up in broad design. They are resolved into their finest motifs and as such are woven and twisted into the close iridescent harmonic fabric with bewildering skill. All is in subtle movement. Yet there is a complete absence of sensuousness, even, for the most part, of dramatic fire. The overpowering climaxes to which he builds are never a frenzy of emotion, they are superbly calm and exalted. The structure of his music is strangely inorganic. His material does not develop. He adds phrase upon phrase, detail upon detail with astonishing power to knit and weave closely what comes with what went before. His extraordinary polyphonic skill seems inborn, native to the man. Arthur Coquard said of him that he thought the most complicated things in music quite naturally. Imitation, canon, augmentation, and diminution, the most complex problems of the science of music, he solves without effort. The perfect canon in the last movement of the violin sonata sounds simple and spontaneous. The shifting, intangible harmonies, the minute melodies, the fine fabric as of a goldsmith's carving, are all the work of a mystic, indescribably pure and radiant. Agitating, complex rhythms are rare. The

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

second movement of the violin sonata and the last movement of the 'Prelude, Aria, and Finale' are exceptional. The heat of passion is seldom felt. Faith and serene light prevail, a music, it has been said, at once the sister of prayer and of poetry. His music, in short, wrote Gustave Dérépas, 'leads us from egoism to love, by the path of the true mysticism of Christianity; from the world to the soul, from the soul to God.'

His form, as has been said, is not organic, but he gives to all his music a unity and compactness by using the same thematic material throughout the movements of a given composition. For example, in the first movement of the 'Prelude, Chorale, and Fugue' for piano, the theme of the fugue which constitutes the last movement is plainly suggested, and the climax of the last movement is built up out of this fugue theme woven with the great movement of the chorale. In the first movement of the 'Prelude, Aria, and Finale,' likewise for piano, the theme of the Finale is used as counterpoint; in the Aria again the same use is made of it; in the Finale the Aria theme is reintroduced, and the coda at the end is built up of the principal theme of the Prelude and a theme taken from the closing section of the Aria. The four movements of the violin sonata are most closely related thematically; the symphony, too, is dominated by one theme, and the theme which opens the string quartet closes it as well. This uniting of the several movements of a work on a large scale by employing throughout the same material was more consistently cultivated by Franck than by any other composer. The concerto for piano and orchestra in E-flat by Liszt is constructed on the same principle; the D minor symphony of Schumann also, and it is suggested in the first symphony of Brahms, but these are exceptions. Germs of such a relationship between movements in the cyclic forms were in the last works of

CÉSAR FRANCK'S WORKS

Beethoven. In Franck they developed to great proportion.

The fugue in the 'Prelude, Chorale and Fugue' and the canon in the last movement of the violin sonata are superbly built, and his restoration of strict forms to works in several movements finds a precedent only in Beethoven and once in Mozart. The treatment of the variation form in the *Variations Symphoniques* for piano and orchestra is no less masterly than his treatment of fugue and canon, but it can hardly be said that he excelled either Schumann or Brahms in this branch of composition.

Franck was a great organist and all his work is as clearly influenced by organ technique as the works of Sebastian Bach were before him. 'His orchestra,' Julien Tiersot wrote in an article published in *Le Ménestrel* for October 23, 1904, 'is sonorous and compact, the orchestra of an organist. He employs especially the two contrasting elements of strings (eight-foot stops) and brass (great-organ). The wood-wind is in the background. This observation encloses a criticism, and his method could not be given as a model; it robs the orchestra of much variety of coloring, which is the richness of the modern art. But we ought to consider it as characteristic of the manner of César Franck, which alone suffices to make such use legitimate.' Undeniably the sensuous coloring of the Wagnerian school is lacking, though Franck devoted himself almost passionately at one time to the study of Wagner's scores; yet, as in the case of Brahms, Franck's scoring, peculiarly his own, is fitting to the quality of his inspiration. There is no suggestion of the warmth of the senses in any of his music. Complete mastery of the art of vivid warm tone-coloring belongs only to those descended from Weber, and preeminently to Wagner.

The works for the pianoforte are thoroughly influ-

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

enced by organ technique. The movement of the rich, solid basses, and the impracticably wide spaces call urgently for the supporting pedals of the organ. Yet they are by no means unsuited to the instrument for which they were written. If when played they suggest the organ to the listener, and the Chorale in the Prelude, Chorale and Fugue is especially suggestive, the reason is not to be found in any solecism, but in the religious spirit that breathes from all Franck's works and transports the listener to the shades of vast cathedral aisles. Among his most sublime works are three Chorale Fantasias for organ, written not long before he died. These, it may safely be assumed, are among the few contributions to the literature for the organ which approach the inimitable master-works of Sebastian Bach.

There are three oratorios, to use the term loosely, 'Ruth,' 'The Redemption,' and 'The Beatitudes,' belonging respectively in the three periods in which Franck's life and musical development naturally fall. All were coldly received during his lifetime. 'Ruth,' written when he was but twenty-four years old, is in the style of the classical oratorios. 'The Redemption,' too, still partakes of the half dramatic, half epic character of the oratorio; but in 'The Beatitudes,' his masterpiece, if one must be chosen, the dramatic element is almost wholly lacking, and he has created almost a new art-form. To set Christ's sermon on the mount to music was a tremendous undertaking, and the great length of the work will always stand in the way of its universal acceptance; but here more than anywhere else Franck's peculiar gift of harmony has full force in the expression of religious rapture and the mysticism of the devout and childlike believer.

It is curious to note the inability of Franck's genius to express wild and dramatic emotion. Among his works for orchestra and for orchestra and piano are

CESAR FRANCK'S WORKS

several that may take rank as symphonic poems, *Les Éolides*, *Le Chasseur maudit*, and *Les Djinns*, the last two based upon gruesome poems, all three failing to strike the listener cold. The symphony with chorus, later rearranged as a suite, 'Psyche,' is an exquisitely pure conception, wholly spiritual. The operas *Hulda* and *Grisèle* were performed only after his death and failed to win a place in the repertory of opera houses.

It is this strange absence of genuinely dramatic and sensuous elements from Franck's music which gives it its quite peculiar stamp, the quality which appeals to us as a sort of poetry of religion. And it is this same lack which leads one to say that he grows up with Wagner and Brahms and yet is not of a piece with either of them. He had an extraordinarily refined technique of composition, but it was perhaps more the technique of the goldsmith than that of the sculptor. His works impress by fineness of detail, not, for all their length and remarkable adherence of structure, by breadth of design. His is intensely an introspective art, which weaves about the simplest subject and through every measure most intricate garlands of chromatic harmony. It is a music which is apart from life, spiritual and exalted. It does not reflect the life of the body, nor that of the sovereign mind, but the life of the spirit. By so reading it we come to understand his own attitude in regard to it, which took no thought of how it impressed the public, but only of how it matched in performance, in sound, his soul's image of it.

With Wagner, Brahms and César Franck the romantic movement in music comes to an end. The impulse which gave it life came to its ultimate forms in their music and was for ever gone. It has washed on only like a broken wave over the works of most of their successors down to the present day. Now new impulses are already at work leading us no one knows whither. It is safe to say that the old music has been written,

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

that new is in the making. An epoch is closed in music, an epoch which was the seed time of harmony as we learned it in school, and as, strangely enough, the future generations seem likely to learn it no more.

Beethoven stood back of the movement. From him sprang the two great lines which we have characterized as the poets and painters in music, and from him, too, the third master, César Franck. It would indeed be hardihood to pronounce whether or not the promise for the future contained in the last works of Beethoven has been fulfilled.

L. H.

CHAPTER XIII

VERDI AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

Verdi's mission in Italian opera—His early life and education—His first operas and their political significance—His second period: the maturing of his style—Crowning achievements of his third period—His contemporaries.

I

ONE can hardly imagine the art of music being what it is to-day without Bach or Mozart or Beethoven, without Monteverdi or Gluck or Wagner. It has been said that great men sum up an epoch and inaugurate one. Janus-like, they look at once behind and before, with glances that survey comprehensively all that is past and pierce prophetically the dim mists of the future. Unmistakably they point the way to the seekers of new paths; down through the ages rings the echo of their guiding voice in the ears of those who follow. So much is this so that the world has come to measure a man's greatness by the extent of his influence on succeeding generations. The test has been applied to Wagner and stamps him unequivocally as one of the great; but a rigid application of the same test would seem to exclude from the immortal ranks the commanding figure of his distinguished contemporary, Giuseppe Verdi.

Yet, while it is still perhaps too early to ascertain Verdi's ultimate place in musical history, there are few to-day who would deny to him the title of great. Undoubtedly he is the most prominent figure in Italian music since Palestrina. The musical history of his country for half a century is almost exclusively the narrative of

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

his remarkable individual achievement. Nevertheless, when he passed away, leaving to an admiring world a splendid record of artistic accomplishment, there remained on the musical soil of Italy no appreciable traces of his passage. He founded no school; he left no disciples, no imitators. Of all the younger Italians who aspired to inherit his honored mantle there is not one in whom we can point to any specific signs of his influence. Even his close friend and collaborator, Boïto, was drawn from his side by the compelling magnetism of the creator of *Tristan*. Some influence, of course, must inevitably have emanated from him; but it was no greater apparently than that exercised even by mediocre artistic personalities upon those with whom they come immediately in contact. It is curious to note, in contrast, the influence on the younger Italians of Ponchielli, a lesser genius, and one is inclined to wonder why 'the noblest Roman of them all' inspired no one to follow in his footsteps.

The reason, however, is not far to seek. Verdi was no innovator, no explorer of fresh fields. He had not the passionate desire that Wagner had for a new and more adequate form of expression. The fierce contempt for conventional limitations so common to genius in all ages was unknown to him. Verdi was temperamentally the most *bourgeois* of great artists. He was conservative, prudent, practical, and self-contained. The appearance of eccentricity was distasteful to him. He had a proper respect for established traditions and no ambition to overturn them. The art forms he inherited appeared to him quite adequate to his purposes, and in the beginning of his career he seems to have had no greater desire than to imitate the dramatic successes of Rossini, Mercadante, and Bellini. His growth was perfectly natural, spontaneous, unconscious. He towered above his predecessors because he was altogether a bigger man—more intelli-

VERDI'S MISSION

gent, more intense, more sincere, and more vital. He was not conscious of the need for a more logical art form than the Italian opera of his time, and unquestioningly he poured his inspiration into the conventional molds; but as time went on his sure dramatic instinct unconsciously shaped these into a vehicle suitable to the expression of his genius. It thus became the real mission of Verdi to develop and synthesize into a homogeneous art form the various contradictory musical and dramatic influences to which he fell heir; and, having done that, his work was finished, nor was there anything left for another to add.

The influences which Verdi inherited were sufficiently complex. The ideals of Gluck and Mozart were strangely diluted by Rossini with the inanities of the concert-opera school, of which Sacchini, Paesiello, Jommelli, and Cimarosa were leading exponents. *Il Barbiere*, it is true, is refreshingly Mozartian and *Tell* is infused with the romantic spirit of Weber and Auber; but even these are not entirely free from the vapidness of the Neapolitans. With Rossini's followers, Bellini, Donizetti, and Mercadante, Italian opera shows retrogression rather than advance, though *Norma* is obviously inspired by *Tell* and *La Favorita* is not lacking in traces of Meyerbeer. The truth is that Italian opera during the first few decades of the nineteenth century was suffering from an epidemic of anæmia. It was not devoid of spontaneity, of inspiration, of facile grace; but it was languid and lackadaisical; it was like the drooping society belle of the period, with her hothouse pallor, her tight corsets and fainting spells and smelling salts. To save it from degenerating into imbecility there was necessary the advent of an unsophisticated personality dowered with robust sincerity, with full-blooded force and virility. And fortunately just such a savior appeared in the person of Giuseppe Verdi.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

The career of Verdi is in many ways the most remarkable in musical history. None other covers such an extended period of productive activity; none other shows such a very gradual and constant development; none other delayed so long its full fruition. Had Verdi died or stopped writing at the same age as did Mozart, Beethoven, Weber, Schubert, or Schumann—to mention only a few—his name would be to us merely that of a delightful melodist whose genius reached its fullest expression in *Rigoletto* and the *Traviata*. He would rank perhaps with Rossini and Donizetti—certainly not higher. But at an age which is usually considered beyond the limit of actual achievement he gave to the world the crowning masterpieces which as far surpass the creations of his prime as *Tristan* and *Die Meistersinger* surpass *Das Liebesverbot* and *Rienzi*.

II

Giuseppe Fortunino Verdi was born on October 10, 1813, in the little village of Le Roncole, about three miles from Busseto. His parents were Carlo Verdi and Luigia Utini, peasants and innkeepers of Le Roncole.

Happily, the narrative of Verdi's early years is comparatively free from the wealth of strange and wonderful legends that cluster like barnacles around the childhood of nearly every genius. There was something exceptional, however, in the sympathetic readiness with which the untutored innkeeper encouraged his son's taste for music by the gift of a spinet and in the eager assiduity with which the child devoted himself to the instrument. In encouraging his son's taste for music it was the far-fetched dream of Carlo Verdi that the boy might some day become organist of the church of Le Roncole. At the age of eleven Verdi justified his father's hopes. Meantime he went to school at Busseto

VERDI'S EARLY LIFE

and subsequently became an office boy in the wholesale grocery house of one Antonio Barezzi.

Barezzi was a cultivated man. He played with skill upon the flute, clarinet, French horn, and ophicleide, and he was president of the local Philharmonic Society, which held its meetings and rehearsals at his house. There Verdi's talent was recognized by the conductor Provesi, who after a few years put the young man in his place as conductor of the Philharmonic Society and frequently used him as his substitute at the organ of the cathedral.

Eventually, however, Verdi exhausted the musical possibilities of Busseto, and his loyal friends, Barezzi and Provesi, decided that he should go to Milan. Through the influence of Barezzi he was awarded one of the bursaries of the *Monte di Pietà*,* and, as this was not sufficient to cover all his expenses, the good Barezzi advanced him money out of his own pocket.

Verdi arrived in Milan in June, 1832, and at once made application in writing for admission as a paying pupil at the Conservatory. He also went through what he afterward called 'a sort of examination.' One learns without surprise that he was not admitted. The reason for his rejection is one of those profound academic secrets about which the world is perfectly unconcerned. He was simply advised by Provesi's friend, Rolla, a master at the Conservatory, to choose a teacher in the town, and accordingly he chose Vincenzo Lavigna. With him Verdi made rapid progress and gained a valuable practical familiarity with the technique of dramatic composition. From this period date many forgotten compositions, including pianoforte pieces, marches, overtures, serenades, cantatas, a *Stabat Mater*

* The *Monte di Pietà e d'Abbondanza di Busseto* is an institution founded primarily for the relief of the poor and secondarily to help poor children of promise to develop their talent for the sciences or fine arts,

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

and other efforts. Some of these were written for the Philharmonic Society of Busseto and some were performed at La Scala at the benefit concerts for the *Pio Istituto Teatrale*. Several of them were utilized by Verdi in the scores of his earlier operas.

From 1833-36 Verdi was *maestro di musica* of Busseto. During that time he wrote a large amount of church music, besides marches for the *banda* (town band) and overtures for the orchestra of the Philharmonic. Except as preparatory exercises, none of these has any particular value. The most important event of those three years was Verdi's marriage to Margarita Barezzi, daughter of the enlightened grocer who so ably deputed Providence in shaping the great composer's career. This marriage seems to have kindled a new ambition in Verdi, and as soon as the conditions of his contract with the municipality of Busseto were fulfilled he returned to Milan, taking with him his wife, two young children and the completed score of a musical melodrama, entitled *Oberto, Conte di San Bonifacio*, of which he had copied all the parts, both vocal and instrumental, with his own hand.

Verdi returned to Milan under most promising auspices, having already attracted the favorable notice of some of the leading social and artistic factors of that musical city. A few years before, when he was studying in Milan, there existed a society of rich musical *dilettanti*, called the *Società Filodrammatica*, which included such exalted personages as Count Renato Borromeo, the Duke Visconti, and Count Pompeo Belgiojoso, and was directed by a *maestro* named Masini. The society held weekly artistic meetings in the hall of the Teatro Filodrammatico, which it owned, and, at the time we speak of, was engaged in preparing Haydn's 'Creation' for performance. Verdi distinguished himself by conducting the performance of that work, in place of the absent *maestri*. Soon

VERDI'S FIRST OPERAS

afterward Count Borromeo commissioned Verdi to write the music for a cantata for voice and orchestra on the occasion of the marriage of some member of his family, and this commission was followed by an invitation to write an opera for the Philodramatic Theatre. The libretto furnished by Masini was altered by Temistocle Solera—a very remarkable young poet, with whom Verdi had cultivated a close friendship—and became *Oberto di San Bonifacio*.

III

This was the opera with which Verdi landed in Milan in 1838. Masini, unfortunately, was no longer director of the Philodramatic Theatre, but he promised to obtain for *Oberto* a representation at La Scala. In this he was assured the support of Count Borromeo and other influential members of the Philodramatic, but, beyond a few commonplace words of recommendation—as Verdi afterward remarked—the noble gentlemen did not exert themselves. Masini, however, succeeded in making arrangements to have *Oberto* produced in the spring of 1839. The illness of one of the principal singers set all his plans awry; but Bartolomeo Merelli, who was then *impresario* of La Scala, was so much impressed with the possibilities of the opera that he decided to put it on at his own expense, agreeing to divide with Verdi whatever price the latter might realize from the sale of the score.* *Oberto* was produced on the seventeenth of November, 1839, and met with a modest success. Merelli then commissioned Verdi to

* This does not sound like extravagant generosity on Merelli's part, but it must be remembered that in those days it was customary for an unknown composer to bear the expense of having his operas produced. The score of *Oberto* was purchased by Giovanni Ricordi, founder of the publishing house of that name, for two thousand Austrian *liri* (about three hundred and fifty dollars).

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

write within two years three operas which were to be produced at La Scala or at the Imperial Theatre of Vienna. None of the librettos supplied by Merelli appealed to Verdi; but finally he chose what appeared to him the best of a bad lot. This was a work in the comic vein, called *Il Finto Stanislao* and renamed by Verdi *Un Giorno di Regno*.

It was the supreme irony of fate that set Verdi just then to the composition of a comic opera. Poverty, sickness, and death in rapid succession darkened that period of his life. Between April and June, 1840, he lost, one after the other, his baby boy, his little girl, and his beloved wife. And he was supposed to write a comic opera! *Un Giorno di Regno* naturally did not succeed, and, feeling thoroughly disheartened by his successive misfortunes, Verdi resolved to abandon a musical career. From this slough of despond he was finally drawn some months later by the attraction of a libretto, written by his friend Solera, which Merelli had succeeded in inducing him to read. It was *Nabucco*.*

The opera *Nabucco* was finished in the fall of 1841 and was produced at La Scala on March 9, 1842. Its success was unprecedented. The first performance was attended by scenes of the wildest and most fervent enthusiasm. So unusually vociferous was the demonstration, even for an Italian theatre, that Verdi at first thought the audience was making fun of him. *Nabucco*, however, was a real sensation. It had a dramatic fire and energy, a massiveness of treatment, a richness of orchestral and choral color that were new to the Italians. The chorus of the Scala had to be specially augmented to achieve its magnificent effects. Somewhat crude it was, no doubt, but it possessed life and force—qualities of which the Italian stage was then sorely in need. One is amused at this date to read the complaints of an eminent English critic—

* *Nabucco* is a common Italian abbreviation of Nabucodonosor.

POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF VERDI'S OPERAS

Henry Fothergill Chorley of the *Athenæum*, to wit—touching its noisiness, its ‘immoderate employment of brass instruments,’ and its lack of melody. Familiar charges! To the Italians *Nabucco* was the ideal of what a tragic music drama should be, and certainly it approached that ideal more nearly than any opera that had appeared in years.*

The great success of *Nabucco* placed Verdi at once on an equal footing with Donizetti, Mercadante, Pacini, Ricci, and the other musical idols of contemporary Italy. The management of La Scala commissioned him to write the *opera d'obbligo* † for the grand season of the Carnival, and Merelli gave him a blank contract to sign upon his own terms. Verdi's demands were sufficiently moderate, and within eleven months he had handed to the management of La Scala the completed score of a new opera, *I Lombardi alla Prima Crociata*.

With *I Lombardi* began Verdi's long and troublesome experience with the Austrian censorship. The time was almost ripe for the political awakening of Lombardo-Venetia, and some of the patriotic feeling which Verdi, consciously or unconsciously, expressed in *Nabucco* had touched an answering chord in the spirit of the Milanese which was partly responsible for the enthusiasm with which the opera was received. Such demonstrations were little to the taste of the Austrians, and when *I Lombardi* was announced they were prepared to edit it into complete political innocuousness. Accordingly, in response to an ill-tempered letter from Cardinal Gaisruck, Archbishop of Milan, drawing attention to the supposed presence in *I Lombardi* of several objectionable and sacrilegious inci-

* The part of Abigail in *Nabucco* was taken by Giuseppina Strepponi, one of the finest lyric *tragédiennes* of her day, who afterward became Verdi's wife.

† The *opera d'obbligo* is the new work which an *impresario* is pledged to produce each season by virtue of his agreement with the municipality as lessee of a theatre.

dents, the director of police, Torresani, notified the management of La Scala that the opera could not be produced without important changes. After much discussion Torresani finally announced that, as he was 'never a person to cut the wings of a young artist,' the opera might go on provided the words *Salve Maria* were substituted for *Ave Maria*.*

I Lombardi was produced in February, 1843, and met with a reception rivalling that which greeted *Nabucco*. As in the case of the latter opera a certain amount of this excitement was political—the audiences reading into many of the passages a patriotic meaning which may or may not have been intended. The chorus, *O Signore, dal tetto natio*, was the signal for a tremendous demonstration similar to that which had been aroused by the words, *O, mia patria, si bella e perduta* in *Nabucco*. Additional political significance was lent to the occasion by the interference of the police to prevent the repetition of the quintet. In truth, Verdi owed much of his extraordinary success of his early operas to his lucky coincidence with the awakening patriotic and revolutionary sentiment of the Italian people. He put into fervent, blood-stirring music the thoughts and aspirations which they dared not as yet express in words and deeds. We cannot believe that he did this altogether unconsciously, for he was much too near the soil and the hearts of the people of Italy not to feel with them and in a measure express them. Indeed, as he himself acknowledged, it was among the common people that his work first met with sympathy and understanding.

After the success of *I Lombardi* Verdi was beset with requests for a new work from all the leading

* This ludicrous concession to archiepiscopal scruples recalls the production of *Nabucco* in London, where the title was changed to *Nino, Re d'Assyria*, in deference to public sentiment—because, forsooth, Nabucco was a Biblical personage. One can fancy how the British public of that day would have received Salome!

POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF VERDI'S OPERAS

opera houses in Italy. He finally made a contract with the Fenice in Venice and chose for his subject Victor Hugo's drama *Ernani*, from which a mediocre libretto was arranged at his request by a mediocre poet named Francesco Maria Piave. The subject appealed strongly to Verdi and resulted in a score that was a decided advance on *Nabucco* and *I Lombardi*. It brought Verdi again into collision with the Austrian police, who insisted on certain modifications; but, in spite of careful censorship, it still furnished an opportunity for patriotic demonstrations on the part of the Venetians, who read a political significance into the chorus, *Si ridesti il Leon di Castiglia*. Under the circumstances one cannot say to what extent, if any, the artistic appeal of *Ernani* was responsible for the enthusiasm which greeted its *première* at La Fenice on March 9, 1844. Some of the other Italian cities—notably Florence—received it coolly enough; but, on the whole it was very successful in Italy. Abroad the impression it produced was less favorable. It was the first Verdi opera to be given in London, where Lumley opened the season of 1845 with it at Her Majesty's Theatre. The manner of its reception may be described in the words of a contemporary wag, who declared after the performance: 'Well, the "I don't knows" have it.' In Paris it was presented at the Théâtre Italien, in January, 1846, but, owing to the excusably strenuous objections of Victor Hugo, its name was changed to *Il Proscritto* and the name of its characters were also altered. Hugo did not admire Piave's version of his drama; neither did it succeed with the Parisian public.

Verdi's next effort was *I due Foscari*, a long-winded melodrama constructed by Piave, which was produced in 1844, and received without enthusiasm. Its merit is far below that of its three immediate predecessors;

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

nor was its successor, *Giovanna d'Arco*, of much more value, though it had the advantage of a good poem written by Solera. *Giovanna d'Arco* was followed, respectively, by *Alzira* and *Attila*, neither of which attained or deserved much success. Great enthusiasm, it is true, marked the reception of *Attila* in Italy, but it is attributable almost solely to the susceptible patriotic fervor of the people, who were aroused to almost frantic demonstrations by such lines as *Avrai tu l'universo, resti l'Italia me*. In London *Attila* attracted to the box-office the magnificent sum of forty dollars, though in Paris a fragment of the work produced what was described as 'a startling effect,' through the medium of the statuesque Sophie Cruvelli.*

Yet during all this time Verdi was advancing, as it were, under cover. His failures were not the result of any decline in his powers. They showed no loss of the vigor and vitality that gave life to *Nabucco*, *I Lombardi*, and *Ernani*. Simply, they were less felicitous, but no less the crude and forceful efforts of a strong man not yet trained to the effective use of his own strength. Some of their defects, too, were no doubt due to the poverty of the libretti, for Verdi was essentially a dramatic genius, dependent for inspiration largely upon the situations with which he was supplied. Certainly the quality of his works seems to vary precisely with the quality of their libretti. Thus, *Macbeth*, an adaptation of Shakespeare's tragedy, made by Piave, proved a distinct advance on its immediate predecessor, *Attila*—even though Piave did not improve on Shakespeare. It was produced at La Pergola, Florence, on March 14, 1847, with complete success. Like so many other Verdi operas, 'Macbeth' provided an excuse for patriotic demonstrations, and in Venice the Austrian soldiery had to be summoned to quell the

* *Attila* in its entirety was never given in Paris.

VERDI'S SECOND PERIOD

riotous and seditious excitement aroused by Palma's singing of the verse:

*La patria tradita
Piangendo c'invita
Fratelli, gli oppressi
Corriamo a salvar.*

'Macbeth' was followed by *I Masnadieri*, which was written for the stage of Her Majesty's Theatre, London. It was originally intended that Verdi should write an opera for the English stage on the subject of King Lear, and it is to be regretted that circumstances prevented him from carrying out his project, for he seems to have found a special inspiration in the Shakespearean drama. The libretto of *I Masnadieri* was written by Andrea Maffei, but that excellent poet had the bad judgment to single out for treatment *Die Räuber* of Schiller, which had already been shamefully mauled and mangled by other librettists. It was a complete failure in London, where Verdi himself conducted it; it also was a complete failure everywhere else.

Notwithstanding this Verdi was offered the post of *chef d'orchestre* at Her Majesty's Theatre, but had to refuse because of contract engagements. His next two operas were mere hack work—*Il Corsaro* and *La Battaglia di Legnano*. The latter, being a deliberate attempt to dramatize a revolution rather than to express the feelings that underlie revolutions, was an artistic failure.

IV

With *Luisa Miller* begins what is usually known as Verdi's second period—the period in which he shook himself free from the grandiose bombast, from which none of his earlier works is entirely free. In this so-called second period he becomes more restrained, more coherent, more *net*; he leans somewhat more to the

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

suave *cantabile* of Bellini and Donizetti, a little more—if the truth be told—to the trite and mawkish. Cammarano fashioned the libretto of *Luisa Miller* from Schiller's immature *Kabale und Liebe*. It was a moderately good libretto and moderately good, perhaps, sufficiently describes the music which Verdi wrote to it. *Stiffelio*, a work of little merit, with a poem by Piave, was the next product of Verdi's second manner. It was given without success at the Grand Theatre, Trieste, in November, 1850.

After *Stiffelio*, however, there came in rapid succession from Verdi's pen three works whose enormous success consummated his fame and whose melodiousness has since reëchoed continuously from every opera stage and street organ in the universe. When *Stiffelio* was produced he was under contract with the *impresario* Lasina to write an opera for the Fenice of Venice. At his request Piave again made free with Victor Hugo, choosing this time the unsavory melodrama, *Le roi s'amuse*, which he adopted under the title of *La Maledizione*. When the Italian police got wind of the project, however, there was serious trouble. *Le roi s'amuse* contains some implied animadversions on the morals of royalty, and the censorship absolutely forbade the appearance in Italy of such an iniquitous trifling with a sacrosanct subject. Verdi, who possessed a generous share of obstinacy, refused to write an opera on any other subject, to the despair of the Fenice management who had promised the Venetians a new opera by the illustrious *maestro*. A way out of the *impasse* was finally found by a commissary of police named Martello, who advised some substitution in the names of the characters—such as the duke of Mantua for the king—and also suggested the title *Rigoletto*, *Buffone di Corte*. These suggestions proved acceptable to Verdi and within forty days the score of *Rigoletto* was written and orchestrated from first note to last.

VERDI'S SECOND PERIOD

Its *première*, on March 11, 1851, was an unqualified success. The too famous *canzone*, '*La donna e mobile*,' caused a sensation which was so accurately foreseen by the composer that he would not put it to paper until a few hours before the performance. *Rigoletto* was presented at the Italian Opera, Covent Garden, London, in the season of 1853 and at the Théâtre Italien, Paris, on January 17, 1857. Its London reception was very cordial.

Certainly *Rigoletto* marks a decided advance on its predecessors. It is simpler in design, more economical of material, more logically developed and dramatically more legitimate—notwithstanding such puerilities as Gilda's eccentric and irrelevant aria in the garden scene. There are present also signs which seem to indicate the influence of Meyerbeer; but it is difficult to trace specific influences in the work of a man of such absorbing individuality as Verdi.

After *Rigoletto* came *Il Trovatore*, which was produced at the Apollo Theatre, Rome, on January 19, 1853, and was received with extraordinary enthusiasm. From Rome it spread like wildfire throughout Italy, everywhere achieving an overwhelming success. In Naples three houses gave the opera at about the same time. Soon all the capitals in Europe were humming its ingratiating melodies. Paris saw it at the Théâtre Italien in December, 1854; London at Covent Garden in May, 1855—even Germany extended to it a warm and smiling welcome. Truly, *Il Trovatore* is, to an extent, unique in operatic annals. It probably enjoys the distinction of being the most popular and least intelligible opera ever written. The rambling and inchoate libretto was made by Cammarano from *El Trovador* of the Spanish dramatist, Antonio Garcia Gultierrez, and nobody has ever lived who could give a succinct and lucid exposition of its story. For that reason probably the work as a whole is such as to deserve the name of 'a

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

concert in costume,' which someone has aptly applied to it. Verdi could not possibly have woven a dramatic score of consistent texture round such a literary nightmare. What he did do was to write a number of very pleasing solos, duets, and trios, together with some theatrical and ingratiating orchestral music. Anyone inclined to question the theatricalism of the score may be interested in comparing the 'Anvil Chorus' of *Il Trovatore* with the 'Forging of the Sword' episode in *Siegfried*. Still, one cannot deny distinct merit to a work which has held a place in the affections of millions of people for more than half a century. Its amazing popularity when it first spread contagiously over Europe aroused a storm of critical comment which reads amusingly at this day. In the eyes of Verdi's enthusiastic protagonists *Il Trovatore* naturally marked the zenith of operatic achievement, while his antagonists placed it unequivocally at the nadir of uninspired and commonplace triviality.

La Traviata sounds like a feminine counterpart of *Il Trovatore*, which it followed and with which it has been so often associated on operatic bills. The two works, however, are drawn from widely different sources and are about as dissimilar in every way as any other two operas of Verdi which might be mentioned. Piave made the libretto of *La Traviata* from *La Dame aux Camélias* of Alexandre Dumas, *fils*. The subject does not appear to be an ideal one for musical treatment; but it is of a style which seems to have a peculiar appeal to composers, as witness *Bohème*, *Sappho*, *Manon*, and many others. One is inclined to award to the *Traviata* a very high place among Verdi's works. It stands alone among them, absolutely different in style and manner from anything else he has done. There is in it a simplicity, a sparkle, a grace, a feminine daintiness, an enticing languor, a spirit quite thoroughly Gallic, suggesting, as Barevi has observed,

MATURING OF VERDI'S STYLE

the style of the *opéra comique* (cf. Chap. I). *La Traviata*, produced at Venice in 1853, was a flat failure, partly owing to the general incapacity of the cast; about a year later, with some changes, it was reproduced in Venice and proved a brilliant success.

Two years of silence followed *La Traviata*. During that time Verdi was engaged on a work which the management of the Paris Opera—passing over Auber, Berlioz, and Halévy—had commissioned him to write for the Universal Exhibition of 1855. The libretto was made by Scribe and Duveyrier and dealt with the sanguinary episode of the French-Italian war of 1282, known as the Sicilian Vespers—a peculiar subject to select under the circumstances. After an amount of delay, caused by the eccentric disappearance of the beautiful Sophie Cruvelli, idol of contemporary Paris, *Les Vêpres Siciliennes* was produced at the Opéra in 1855. It was received with great enthusiasm, but did not outlive the popularity of its first prima donna. It was followed by *Simon Boccanegra*, composed to a poem adapted by Piave from Schiller's *Fieschi*, which, produced at the Fenice, Venice, in 1857, with little success, was later revised by that excellent poet, Arrigo Boïto, and, with the music recast by Verdi, was received at La Scala, Milan, in 1881 with distinct favor.

Verdi's next opera, *Un Ballo in Maschera*, has a peculiar history, turning on the curious interaction of art and politics which is such a feature of Verdi's career. It was adapted from the 'Gustave III' of Scribe, which Auber had already set to music for the Paris Opera, and was at first entitled *La Vendetta in Domino*. Written for the San Carlo Theatre, Naples, it was about to be put into rehearsal when word arrived of the attempted assassination of Napoleon III by Orsini. The Italian police, morbidly sensitive in such matters, at once forbade the representation of *Un Ballo in Maschera* without radical modifications, and Verdi, with

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

his customary obstinacy, emphatically refused to make any alteration whatsoever. Even when the San Carlo management instituted a civil action against him for two hundred thousand francs Verdi declined to budge. He was openly supported in his attitude by the entire population of Naples, which greeted his appearance everywhere with enthusiastic shouts of *Viva Verdi!* Eventually, feeling that the affair would create a revolution on its own account, the authorities requested Verdi to take himself and his opera out of Naples. The opera was then secured by Jacovacci, the famous *impresario* of the Apollo Theatre in Rome, who swore he would present it in that city at any cost. 'I shall arrange with the censure, with the cardinal-governor, with St. Peter if necessary,' he said. 'Within a week, my dear *maestro*, you shall have the libretto, with all the *visas* and all the *buon per la scena* possible.' Nevertheless the papal government did not prove so tractable, and, before *Un Ballo in Maschera* could appear in Rome the scene of the action had to be shifted from Sweden to America and the character of Gustave III transmogrified into the Earl of Warwick, Governor of Boston! Indifferent to historic accuracy, however, Rome received the opera with enthusiasm, when it was produced in February, 1859. Upon the occasion of its presentation at the Théâtre Italien, Paris, on January 13, 1861, the scene was shifted to the kingdom of Naples—where it still remains—because Mario refused to wear the costume of a New England Puritan at the beginning of the eighteenth century. *Un Ballo in Maschera* was given in London in 1861 and was received very cordially.

It is, in effect, one of the most mature works of Verdi's second manner. Still more mature and suggestive of what was to come is *La Forza del Destino*, which was written for the Imperial Theatre of St. Petersburg, and was produced there on November 10,

VERDI'S CROWNING ACHIEVEMENTS

1862, encountering merely a *succès d'estime*. Repellently gloomy and gruesome is the story of *La Forza del Destino*, adapted by Piave from *Don Alvar*, a tragedy in the exaggerated French romantic vein by Don Angel de Saavedra. The oppressive libretto perhaps accounted in large measure for the lack of success which attended the opera, not only in St. Petersburg, but in Milan, where it was produced at La Scala in 1869, and in Paris where the Théâtre Italien staged it in 1876. Yet *La Forza del Destino* contains some of the most powerful, passionate and poignant music that Verdi ever wrote, and one can see in it more clearly than in any of his other works suggestions of that complete maturity of genius which was to blossom forth in *Aïda*, *Otello*, and *Falstaff*.*

Notwithstanding the indifferent reception accorded *Les Vêpres Siciliennes* in Paris, the management of the opera again approached Verdi when a new gala piece was needed for the Universal Exhibition of 1866. The opera management was singularly unfortunate in its experience with Verdi. For this occasion the composer was supplied by Méry and Camille du Locle with an indifferent libretto called *Don Carlos*, and he was unable to rise above its level.

V

Don Carlos, however, was but the darkness before the dawn of a new period more brilliant and glorious than was dreamed of even by those of Verdi's admirers who did him highest reverence. At that time Wag-

* For the sake of completeness we may mention here as the chronologically appropriate place Verdi's *L'Inno delle Nazioni*, written for the London International Exhibition of 1862 as part of an international musical patchwork in which Auber, Meyerbeer, and Sterndale Bennett also participated. *L'Inno delle Nazioni* may be forgotten without damage to Verdi's reputation.

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

ner had not yet come into his own, and, in the eyes of the world at large Verdi stood absolutely without peer among living composers. Consequently, when Ismaïl Pasha, Khedive of Egypt, wished to add lustre to the beautiful opera houses he had built in Cairo he could think of nothing more desirable for the purpose than a new work from the pen of the great Italian. That nothing might be wanting to make such an event a memorable triumph, Mariette Bey, the distinguished French Egyptologist, sketched out, as a subject for the proposed work, a stirring, colorful story, recalling vividly the picturesque glories of ancient Egypt. This story set fire to Verdi's imagination. Under his direction a libretto in French prose was made from Mariette's sketch by Camille du Locle and done into Italian verse by A. Ghislanzoni. So ardently did Verdi become enamoured of the work that within a few months he had handed to Ismaïl Pasha the completed score of *Aïda*. The opera was to be performed at the end of 1870, but owing to a number of causes—including the imprisonment of the scenery within the walls of Paris by the besieging Germans—its performance was delayed for a year. It was finally given on December 24, 1871, before a brilliant cosmopolitan audience and amid scenes of the most intense enthusiasm.* The success of *Aïda* was overwhelming; nor was it due, as in the case of so many other Verdi operas, to causes extraneous to the work itself. Milan, which heard *Aïda* on February 7, 1872, received it with an applause which rivalled in spontaneous fervor the enthusiasm of Cairo, and the verdict of Milan has been emphatically endorsed by every important opera house in the world. Within three years, beginning on April 22, 1876, the

* Contrary to a widespread impression *Aïda* was not written for the opening of the Khedival Opera House, that event having taken place in 1869. It may also be observed that the story of *Aïda* has no historical foundation, though it was written with an expert eye to historical and archaeological verisimilitude.

Giuseppe Verdi



VERDI'S CROWNING ACHIEVEMENTS

Théâtre Italien presented it sixty-eight times to appreciative Parisian audiences, and later, at the Opéra, its reception was still enthusiastic. England, hitherto characteristically somewhat cold to Verdi, greeted *Aïda* warmly when it was given at Covent Garden in 1876, and bestowed upon the work the full measure of its critical approval.

Aïda was the storm centre around which raged the first controversy touching the alleged influence of Wagner on Verdi. In *Aïda*, apparently, we find all the identifying features of the modern music-drama as modelled by Wagner. There is the broad declamation, the dramatic realism and coherence, the solid, powerful instrumentation, the deposition of the voice from its commanding position as the all-important vehicle, the employment of the orchestra as the principal exponent of color, character, expression—putting the statue in the orchestra and leaving the pedestal on the stage, as Grétry said of Mozart. Yet, in spite of all this, in spite of much specious critical reasoning to the contrary, *Aïda* is altogether Verdi, and there is in it of Wagner not a jot, not a tittle! It is, of course, impossible to suppose that Verdi was unacquainted with Wagner's works, and equally impossible to suppose that he remained unimpressed by them. But Verdi's was emphatically not the type of mind to borrow from any other. He was an exceptionally introspective, self-centred and self-sufficient man. Besides, he was concerned with the development of the Italian lyric drama purely according to Italian taste, and in directions which he himself had followed more or less strictly from the beginning of his career. From the propaganda of Wagner he must inevitably have absorbed some pregnant suggestions as to musical dramatics, particularly as Wagner was in that respect the voice of the *zeitgeist*; but of specific Wagnerian influence in his music there is absolutely no trace. Anyone who

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

follows the development of Verdi's genius from *Nabucco* can see in *Aïda* its logical maturing. No elements appear in the latter opera which are not appreciable in embryo in the former—between them lies simply thirty years of study, knowledge and experiment.

During a period of enforced leisure in 1873 Verdi wrote a string quartet, the only chamber music work that ever came from his fertile pen. His friend, the noble and illustrious Manzoni, passed away in the same year, and Verdi proposed to honor his memory by composing a *requiem* to be performed on the first anniversary of his death. The municipality of Milan entered into the project to the extent of planning an elaborate public presentation of the work at the expense of the city. Verdi had already composed a *Libera me* for a mass which, in accordance with a suggestion made by him to Tito Ricordi, was to be written in honor of Rossini by the leading composers of Italy. For some undiscovered reason or reasons this mass was never given. The *Libera me* which Verdi wrote for it, however, served as a foundation for the new mass in memory of Manzoni. On May 22, 1874, the *Manzoni Requiem* was given at the church of San Marco, Milan, in the presence of musicians and *dilettanti* from all over Europe. Later it was presented to enthusiastic audiences at La Scala, at one of the *Matinées Spirituelles* of the Salle Favart, Paris, and at the Royal Albert Hall, London.

Hans von Bülow, with Teutonic emphasis, has characterized the *Requiem* as a 'monstrosity.' While the description is perhaps extreme, it is, from one point of view, not altogether unjustified. Certainly a German critic, having in mind the magnificent classic structures of Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven, could hardly look with tolerance upon this colorful expression of southern genius. The *Manzoni Requiem* is, in fact, a complete contradiction of itself, and as such can hardly be

VERDI'S CROWNING ACHIEVEMENTS

termed a successful artistic achievement. The odor of the *coulisses* rather than that of the sanctuary hangs heavily about it. But, if one can forget that it is a mass and listen to it simply as a piece of music, then the *Requiem* stands revealed for what it is—a touching, noble, and profound expression of love and sorrow for a friend departed. This is Verdi's only important essay in sacred music, though mention may be made of his colorful and dramatic *Stabat Mater*, written in 1898.

A five-act opera entitled *Montezuma* which Verdi wrote in 1878 may be passed over with the remark that it was produced in that year at La Scala, Milan. Then for nearly ten years Verdi was silent. The world was content to believe that his silence was permanent, that the marvellously productive career of the great master had come to a glorious and fitting close in *Aïda* and the *Requiem*. Nobody then could have believed that *Aïda*, far from making the culmination of Verdi's achievement, was but the beginning of a new period in which his genius rose to heights that dwarfed even the loftiest eminence of his heyday. There is nothing in the history of art that can parallel the final flight of this man, at an age when the wings of creative inspiration have usually withered into impotence, or crumbled into dust. Under the circumstances one can, of course, very easily overestimate the æsthetic value of the last works of Verdi, surrounded as they are in one's imagination with the halo which the venerable age of their creator has inevitably lent to them. As a matter of fact, the ultimate place of Verdi's last works in musical history it is not within our power to determine. The mighty weapon of popular approval—which bestows the final accolade or delivers the last damning thrust, according to one's point of view—has as yet missed both *Otello* and *Falstaff*. Critics differ, as critics will and ever did. Musically, dramatically,

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

formally, and technically *Otello* and *Falstaff* are the most finished examples of operatic composition that Italy has ever given to the world; and even outside Italy—if one excepts the masterpieces of Wagner—it is doubtful if they can be paralleled. Whether, also, they possess the divine spark which alone gives immortality is a moot point. We cannot say.

The goddess of fortune, who on the whole kept ever close to Verdi's side, secured for him in his culminating efforts the collaboration of Arrigo Boïto, a poet and musician of exceptional gifts. Undoubtedly Boïto made very free with Shakespeare in his libretto of *Otello*, but, compared with previous attempts to adapt Shakespeare for operatic purposes, his version is an absolute masterpiece. Even more remarkable, and much more faithful to the original, is his version of *Falstaff*, which, taken by and large, is probably the only perfect opera libretto ever written. *Otello* is a story which might be expected to find perfect understanding and sympathy in the mind and temperament of an Italian, and consequently the faithful preservation of the original spirit is not so remarkable; but that an Italian should succeed in retaining through the change of language the thoroughly English flavor of *Falstaff* is truly extraordinary.

Otello was produced on February 5, 1887, at La Scala, Milan. That it was a brilliant success is not artistically very significant. Verdi to the Milanese was something less than a god and more than a composer. Its first performance at the Lyceum Theatre, London, in July, 1889, and at the Paris Opéra on October 12, 1894, were both gala occasions, and the enthusiasm which greeted it may safely be interpreted in part as a personal tribute to the venerable composer. Outside of such special occasions, and in the absence of the leather-lunged Tamagno, *Otello* has always been received with curiosity, with interest, with respect, with

VERDI'S CROWNING ACHIEVEMENTS

admiration, but without enthusiasm and, generally speaking, without appreciation. A certain few there are whose appreciative love of the work is fervent and sincere; but the attitude of the public at large toward *Otello* is not sympathetic.

Much the same may be said of the public attitude toward *Falstaff*—though the public, for some reason difficult to fathom, is provided with comparatively few opportunities of becoming familiar with this greatest of all Verdi's creations. Excepting *Die Meistersinger* and *Le Nozze di Figaro* there is nothing in the literature of comic opera that can compare with *Falstaff*, and in its dazzling, dancing exuberance of youth and wit and gaiety it stands quite alone. '*Falstaff*,' says Richard Strauss, 'is the greatest masterpiece of modern Italian music. It is a work in which Verdi attained real artistic perfection.' 'The action in *Falstaff*,' James Huneker writes, 'is almost as rapid as if the text were spoken; and the orchestra—the wittiest and most sparkling *riant* orchestra I ever heard—comments upon the monologue and dialogue of the book. When the speech becomes rhetorical so does the orchestra. It is heightened speech and instead of melody of the antique, formal pattern we hear the endless melody which Wagner employs. But Verdi's speech is his own and does not savor of Wagner. If the ideas are not developed and do not assume vaster proportions it is because of their character. They could not be so treated without doing violence to the sense of proportion. Classic purity in expression, Latin exuberance, joyfulness, and an inexpressibly delightful atmosphere of irresponsible youthfulness and gaiety are all in this charming score. . . .' Nowhere in *Falstaff* do we find the slightest suggestion of Wagner. Its spirit is much more that of Mozart. Naturally it invites comparison both with *Die Meistersinger* and with *Figaro*, but the

A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

comparison in either case is futile. In form and content *Falstaff* is absolutely *sui generis*.

La Scala, which witnessed the first Verdi triumph, also witnessed his last. *Falstaff* had its *première* there on February 9, 1893, in the presence of 'the best elements in music, art, politics and society,' to quote a contemporary correspondent of the London *Daily Graphic*. The audience, so we are informed, grew wildly riotous in its enthusiasm. Even the 'best elements' so far forgot themselves as to wax demonstrative; while that part of the population of Milan which was not included in the audience held a demonstration of its own after the performance in front of Verdi's hotel, forcing the aged composer to spend most of the night walking back and forth between his apartment and the balcony that he might listen to reiterated appreciations of an opera which the majority of the demonstrators had not heard. Paris heard *Falstaff* at the Opéra Comique in April, 1894, and London at Covent Garden in the following month. *Falstaff* was the crowning effort of a distinguished genius, of a composer who had shed great lustre on the fame of Italian music, of a man venerable in age and character and achievement. It was Verdi's swan-song. He died in Milan on January 27, 1901.*

Verdi's extended career brings practically every nineteenth-century Italian composer of note within the category of his chronological contemporaries; but of contemporaries in the philosophical sense he had practically none worthy of mention. Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, Mercadante, Frederico and Luigi Ricci all outlived the beginning of Verdi's artistic career. *I Puritani* first appeared in 1834, *Don Pasquale* in 1843, the *Crispino e la Comare* of the Ricci brothers in 1850.

* Space does not permit us to speak of Verdi's personality, his private life, or the many honors and distinctions which came to him. The reader is referred to 'Verdi: Man and Musician,' by F. J. Crowest, New York, 1897, and 'Verdi: An Anecdotic History,' by Arthur Pougin, London, 1887.

VERDI'S CONTEMPORARIES

Rossini died only three years and Mercadante only one year before *Aïda* was produced, though both had long ceased to compose. But all of these men belong artistically to a period prior to Verdi. Many of the younger Italians, including Mascagni, Leoncavallo, and Puccini, had already attracted attention when *Falstaff* appeared; but they again belong to a later period. Boïto * is hard to classify. He is the Berlioz of Italian music, on a smaller scale—a polygonal figure which does not seem to fit into any well-defined niche. His *Mefistofele* was produced as early as 1868, yet he seems to belong musically and dramatically to the post-Wagnerian epoch. Apart from those who were just beginning or just ending their artistic careers Italy was almost barren of meritorious composers during most of Verdi's life. It would appear as if that one gigantic tree absorbed all the nourishment from the musical soil of Italy, leaving not enough to give strength to lesser growths. Of the leading Italian composers chosen to collaborate on the mass in honor of Rossini, not one, except Frederico Ricci and Verdi himself, is now remembered.† There remains Amilcare Ponchielli (1834-86) who is important as the founder of the Italian realistic school which has given to the world *I Pagliacci*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Le Gioje della Madonna*, and other essays in blood-letting brutality. His operas include *I Promessi Sposi* (1856), *La Savojarda* (1861), *Roderica* (1864), *La Stella del Monte* (1867), *Le Due Generale* (1873), *La Gioconda* (1876), *Il Figliuol Prodigio* (1880), and *Marion Delorme* (1885). Of these only *La Gioconda*, which still enjoys an equivocal popularity, has succeeded in establishing itself. Ponchielli

* Arrigo Boïto, b. Padua, 1842, composer and poet, studied at the Milan Conservatory. See Vol. III.

† Besides Verdi and Ricci the list included Buzzola, Bazzini, Pedrotti, Cagnoni, Nini, Boucheron, Coccia, Jaspari, Platania, Petrella, and Mabellini. Mercadante was omitted because his age and feeble health rendered it impossible for him to collaborate in the work. Jaspari is still in some repute as a musical historiographer.

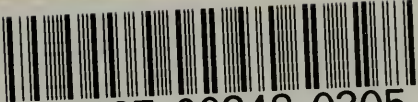
A NARRATIVE HISTORY OF MUSIC

wrote an amount of other music, sacred and secular, but none of it calls for special notice, except the *Garibaldi Hymn* (1882), which is likely to live after all his more pretentious efforts have been forgotten.

There is nothing more to be said of Verdi's contemporaries. The history of his career is practically the history of Italian music during the same time. He reigned alone in unquestionable supremacy, and, whatever the future may have in store for Italy, it has not yet disclosed a worthy successor to his vacant throne.

W. D. D.

1871


3 1197 00348 0305

DATE DUE

JUL 28 1986			
AUG 9 1986			
NOV 12 1987			
NOV 9 5 1987			

